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**NORMATIVE POWER EUROPE? THE EFFECT OF EU HUMAN RIGHTS
PRACTICE ON THE EXTERNAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE EU IN TURKEY AND
JORDAN**

MA thesis

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Abstract

This Master's thesis examines the effect of European Union's (EU) human rights practice on the external perceptions of the EU. More specifically, it focuses on the consistency between EU human rights rhetoric and practice and explores how the possible inconsistencies affect the external image of the Union as a normative model on human rights. Previous research on Normative Power Europe (NPE) and external perceptions of the EU has shown that there are specific expectations to the foreign policy conduct of a normative actor. However, it has also been highlighted that the importance of a link between normative power and external perceptions has been underestimated in the literature thus far. Therefore, the thesis aims to investigate this link by focusing on the example of EU human rights consistency in its treatment of refugees and other migrants throughout its hotspot approach and to explore the effects of the human rights consistency on the external perceptions of the Union in regard of being a normative model on human rights and migration. To study this, the thesis first examines the human rights rhetoric of the EU and compares it to the human rights practice in the hotspot first reception facilities of migrants in Italy and Greece. The study then moves on to investigate the external perceptions of the EU as a normative actor on human rights and migration in Turkey and Jordan based on the statements of political elite and interviews with representatives of the civil society. The findings show that there are various inconsistencies between the EU's rhetoric and practice in terms of human rights in the hotspots. Furthermore, these inconsistencies have negatively affected the external perceptions of the EU as a model on human rights and migration in Turkey and Jordan. Additionally, the study reveals that the external perceptions of the EU as a human rights protector in the world have suffered since 2015 as a response to the poor treatment of refugees within the territory of the Union.

Keywords: European Union, Normative Power Europe, external perceptions, human rights practice, migration, hotspot approach

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	4
List of Abbreviations	5
Introduction	6
1. Theoretical framework: Normative Power and the External Perceptions of the EU	10
1.1.Normative Power Europe.....	10
1.2.External perceptions of the European Union	22
2. Methodology	31
2.1.Case selection and research design	31
2.2.Research methods used in the thesis	35
3. European Union Human Rights Rhetoric and Practice	39
3.1.European Union human rights rhetoric	39
3.2.‘Hotspots’ – the first reception facilities in Greece and Italy	41
3.3.European Union human rights practice in the hotspots	49
3.4.Discussion	57
4. External Perceptions of the EU in Turkey and Jordan	59
4.1.Elite perceptions of the EU as a human rights model in the context of the treatment of migrants	59
4.1.1. Turkey	59
4.1.2. Jordan	65
4.2.Civil society perceptions of the EU as a human rights model in the context of the treatment of migrants	69
4.2.1. Turkey	70
4.2.2. Jordan	75
4.3.Discussion	81
Conclusions	84
References	90
Primary sources – leaders’ speeches, statements and interviews	90
Secondary sources	96
Annex 1	104
Annex 2	105
Annex 3	106

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List of Abbreviations

CFREU - Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

EASO – European Asylum Support Office

ECHR – European Convention on Human Rights

ECRE – European Council on Refugees and Exiles

ECtHR – European Court of Human Rights

EEAS – European External Action Service

EPL – External Perceptions Literature

EU – European Union

EURTF – European Union Regional Task Force

FRA – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

IOM – International Organization for Migration

IRIN – Integrated Regional Information Networks

MDSD – Most different systems design

MSF - Médecins Sans Frontières

NGO – Non-governmental organization

NPE – Normative Power Europe

TEU – Treaty on European Union

UNCRC - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Introduction

The topic of the present study is the effect of the EU human rights practices on the external perceptions of the EU. More specifically, the research aims to explain the effects that the consistency between EU human rights rhetoric and human rights practice with respect to the treatment of refugees and migrants has on the external perceptions of the EU as a normative model. The study focuses on the external perceptions of the EU as a normative model in human rights protection and migration in Turkey and Jordan, two of the major refugee hosting countries on the most populated – Eastern Mediterranean migratory route towards the EU. The research is limited to the time period of 2015 – 2020, from the peak of the European migrant crisis until the beginning of conducting the study in November 2020.

It is important to study external perceptions of the EU because they play a significant part in the self-identification process of the EU as an international actor. By definition, roles are shaped by the role conception of an actor itself, the expectations of other actors and the socially prescribed roles which are a result of international negotiations among actors (Holsti, 1970; Elgström & Smith, 2006; Harnisch, 2011; Elgström & Chaban, 2015). It is worth noting that the outsiders tend to have quite unshakable views on what kind of role(s) the EU should hold in various contexts. This means that external perceptions of the EU seem to be rather stable and a change in EU human rights practice might not right away lead to change in the perceptions but instead occur with a delay. These views are shaped by previous experience; existing images of the EU which are to some extent also influenced by what the EU itself claims; and the normative expectations to the EU. The perceptions that the external actors have based on these conditions shape EU roles and the quality of its performance within these roles (Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 20). Furthermore, any self-identification of the EU as a certain kind of power in the world only holds a meaning in case this identification is also shared by the outsiders (Tsuruoka, 2008: 5).

Secondly, external perceptions have a direct effect on the effectiveness of EU policies abroad. How the rest of the world perceives the EU holds great importance when it comes to promoting or opposing the achievements of EU policies (Lucarelli, 2013). For example, studying the external perceptions allows us to determine whether the EU is considered to be

an exceptional actor or even a normative power in the rest of the world (Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 20). Reactions to EU's policy initiatives are likely to be determined by how legitimate, coherent and credible they seem. Legitimacy refers to the assumption that what the actor is doing is appropriate, desirable and in compliance with certain socially constructed norms and values (Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 21). The more legitimacy an actor has, the easier it will be for it to persuade other actors (Nye, 2007: 177). Similar to legitimacy, credibility as well is a subjective element. It is affected by the perceptions of the available resources, unity, and coherence. For the EU to be a model on human rights and migration, this means that unless the EU itself lives up to the commitments that it has taken upon by the treaties and other relevant laws and regulations, it is not likely to be taken seriously by other actors in this specific field. The final quality – coherence – means the consistency between the policies and actions, different institutions, and member states (Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 22-23). These three factors are central to the topic of this thesis as it addresses the consistency between the EU human rights conversation and the actual practice within its borders, at the hotspot refugee camps. Based on the definitions above, the unwillingness of the EU to act in a manner it promises and also advertises abroad – in other words, inconsistently – negatively affects both its legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of the external actors, at least in the issue area of human rights, but as a domino effect possibly also in other areas.

Additionally, previous studies have shown that while the EU is often perceived to carry normative features in association to human rights, the EU's actions regarding human rights related to refugees have received negative observations and triggered doubts about the applicability of EU norms in that particular context (Barcevičius et al., 2015: 19). For this reason it is important to conduct more detailed case studies with respect to the EU human rights practice within its borders, such as in the hotspot refugee camps, and demonstrate its impact on the external perceptions of the Union and on the EU's image as a normative model in the world.

Several scholars (Elgström & Chaban, 2015; Chaban et al., 2013; Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012) of external perceptions literature have suggested that the future studies in the field should increasingly focus on discourse-, location-, issue- and time-specific indicators in their

analyses because this will build a solid theoretical basis for the increasingly attractive study area of EU external perceptions. Systemic and distinct profile of EU external perceptions will not only carry high academic value, but also benefit the EU external action practitioners such as negotiators and diplomats working in the field (Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 32-33). That is namely how this thesis focused on the external perceptions of the EU as a normative actor in the fields of human rights and migration within a specific region – Turkey and Jordan as representative countries of the nearby Middle-East – will contribute to the field of study of EU external perceptions.

Taking all the above into account, the study explores the effect that the EU human rights practice has on how the EU is perceived abroad and whether it influences the image of the EU as a normative model on human rights. The research question of the thesis is the following: how does the consistency between EU human rights rhetoric and practice in the treatment of migrants affect the external perceptions of the EU as a normative model on human rights and migration? To answer the posed research question, the study forms the following hypothesis: Inconsistency between the EU human rights rhetoric and practice in the treatment of migrants and refugees negatively affects the external perceptions of the EU as a model on human rights protection and migration. In order to test this hypothesis, a comparative study focusing on Turkey and Jordan, which are both major refugee hosting states on the Eastern Mediterranean migratory route towards the EU, will be conducted.

This thesis analyzes two European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) situation reports from the hotspot refugee first reception facilities in Italy and Greece to assess the EU human rights practice in the hotspots and compares it to the EU human rights rhetoric embedded in its treaties and regulations. To measure the effect of consistency between EU human rights rhetoric and practice on the external perceptions of the EU in Turkey and Jordan, the study uses content analysis of political leaders' speeches and data retrieved from nine semi-structured interviews with NGO representatives working with refugees, five from Turkey and four from Jordan. All of the interviewees have agreed to participate in the interviews under the condition of full anonymity to themselves and their organizations.

The thesis takes a narrow focus to the human rights practice related to the treatment of refugees and other migrants within the borders of the EU. Therefore, the external perceptions of the EU in Turkey and Jordan are also focused on the issue areas of human rights and migration only. The study will not assess the EU as a Normative Power in a general context. Instead it will examine specifically whether the EU is seen as a normative model on human rights and migration in the world. Additionally, the external perceptions of the EU as a normative actor on human rights and migration will be studied only in two Middle-Eastern countries – Turkey and Jordan.

The thesis is broadly divided into three sections. The first section is the theoretical framework which the research is based on. The theoretical framework section explains the concept of normative power and introduces the phenomenon of Normative Power Europe (NPE) as well as discusses the EU external perceptions literature (EPL). The second section of the thesis is the methodology of the research. The methodology section explains the methodological framework used for the research, introduces the sources used for the data collection and discusses the case selection and research variables. The third section is the empirical section consisting of the analysis of the research findings. This section entails the analysis of the consistency between EU human rights rhetoric and practice and the analysis of the data on the external perceptions of the EU in Turkey and Jordan, gathered from the leader's speeches and statements, and interviews with the civil society representatives.

1. Theoretical framework: Normative Power and the External Perceptions of the EU

To study the normative impact of EU human rights practice on the external perceptions of the EU, it is necessary to understand the essential arguments of both Normative Power literature and External Perceptions literature. In general terms, the concept of normative power refers to one's ability to persuade the others' understanding of what is normal and thus influence them to act in a particular way, in compliance with 'the normal'. This concept is tightly related to external perceptions because the impressions of external actors ultimately decide whether another international actor is considered to be worth following or not. This chapter will outline the most important theoretical claims of Normative Power Europe and External Perceptions of the EU literature, emphasize their connecting points and create a theoretical framework of understanding for studying the effect of EU human rights practice on the external perceptions of the EU in Turkey and Jordan.

1.1. Normative Power Europe

The existing literature on the EU in general entails a rich discussion on what kind of an international actor the EU is. One important aspect of this discussion is what kind of a power the EU is in the international arena. Normative Power Europe (NPE) is a concept that has been widely discussed and debated in the International Relations literature for the past two decades since Ian Manners wrote his seminal work on the phenomenon in 2002. Since then, the concept has been developed further, studied both theoretically and empirically in various contexts and based on various examples (e.g. Manners, 2002; Whitman, 2011; Pace, 2007), but also criticized by primarily realist scholars for the lack of regard for the 'selfish' interests of the large and powerful member states of the EU (e.g. Hyde-Price, 2006). The first section of the theoretical background of this thesis will introduce the basis of normative power Europe, how it is constructed and what are its shortcomings. The section on normative power Europe ends with the discussion of literature establishing the link between NPE and EU external perceptions, bringing together the two theoretical cornerstones of the given thesis.

The scholarly interest in the normative features of the EU is strongly based on the developments in European foreign policy cooperation and the specific emphasis on values and norms according to which the EU conducts its external relations. Those norms and principles are embedded in the foundational treaties of the Union and form the very identity of the EU, thus also shaping its role in the international arena as a foreign policy actor (Whitman, 2011: 2; Manners, 2002). In some of his first writings, Manners explained the need to introduce normative power Europe with the lack of normative theorizing in the literature, as well as the necessity to frame post-Cold War politics in a more principle-oriented way since the EU had developed to emphasize the principles of democracy, rule of law and human rights (Manners, 2007a: 77; Whitman, 2011: 2). The basic idea of the normative power argument thus lies in rejecting the state-centered view that is common in previous traditional approaches and rather defining EU foreign policy in normative terms (Whitman, 2011: 3-4), working through ideas, opinions and conscience (Diez & Manners, 2007: 175). Richard Whitman has argued in the introduction of his book on Normative Power Europe that “normative power focuses on ‘non-material exemplification found in the contagion of norms’ through imitation and representation of the EU which has become a pole of attraction” (Whitman, 2011: 4). What makes the EU a unique case and a perfect example of a normative power according to Manners, is the way it has positioned universal norms and principles at the center of its relations both with its member states and the rest of the world (Manners, 2006e: 176). Although these norms and principles are universal, the way the EU has internalized them into its policies and is pursuing them in its external relations, is extraordinary.

EU normative basis

Ian Manners argues that the EU’s normative power originates from three sources: historical context meaning the legacy of the two world wars; hybrid polity meaning that the EU consists of intergovernmental and supranational institutions and political-legal constitutionalism meaning that it is elite-driven and treaty-based. These features enabled to bring the common values and principles of the member states under the same framework (Manners, 2002: 240-241). The two world wars pushed the members to strive for a peaceful Europe while the

hybrid polity guarantees that decisions are not only made by one member state nor only by supranational bodies, thus threatening the states' sense of sovereignty. Political-legal constitutionalism sets for the EU to be led by politicians while clearly setting its agenda in the common legal framework. According to NPE literature, these principles define the EU in various policy areas where it places the norms such as peace, democracy, liberty, rule of law and human rights into the very center of its relations with the rest of the world and thus builds its power and legitimacy on these norms (Manners, 2002: 244). In his work, Manners has listed the norms that he bases the NPE argument on, dividing them into five 'core' norms and four 'minor' norms, all originating from the foundational treaties or general EU practices. The core norms are the most important norms that the Union is built on. These norms are peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The minor norms can be in a way considered to be supporting norms to the core ones and include social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development and good governance (Manners, 2002: 242-243). Manners further argues that "the reinforcement and expansion of the norms identified [...] allows the EU to present and legitimate itself as being more than the sum of its parts" (Manners, 2002: 244). This idea also gives a clear signal that the EU based on its values should have a great normative power.

While the above listed norms are specific to the EU and aim to define its nature and set a way for its actions, normative power as such can be described as an actor who is able to define any kind of conceptions of normal and thus pave a way of behavior for the others. The normative power argument is strongly based on the actorness and capability of the EU in world politics in general (Whitman, 2011: 6). The ability to shape normality in world politics has clear practical implications since changing norms (which essentially has ideational implications) in the end leads to the introduction of new standards and regulations and the conception of appropriate action in the international arena (Manners, 2008b: 45). Ultimately then, normative power has two different aspects: *being* normative and *acting* in a normative way (Manners, 2008b: 45; Whitman, 2011: 6) meaning that while the first is directly related to the very nature of the actor, the latter relates to whether the actor behaves ethically according to the values or not. In his seminal work, Manners argued that the normative power

argument about Europe foremost focuses on what the EU *is* (Manners, 2002: 252). In her criticism for NPE, Lisbeth Aggestam however has proposed that while the EU's influence and impact is becoming more and more important, there is a need to shift the focus on what the EU *does* rather than what it *is* (Aggestam, 2008: 4). This was in fact pointed out by Alston and Weiler already in 1999 when they argued that "the Union can only achieve the leadership role to which it aspires through the example it sets" (Alston & Weiler, 1999: 4-5). To conclude, when studying NPE, one should focus both on what makes the EU normative by its nature and how this normativity is visible from its behavior.

However, the practice of normative power does not conclude with normative action merely but gets further transferred into impact. Whitman has pointed out that the study of NPE requires a thorough analysis of various impacts on different levels such as legal, individual and foremost the non-European level (Whitman, 2011: 7). In one of his later works, Manners discusses the normative basis of the EU in its external actions referring to procedural normative ethics. Based on this, the first step for the EU is to become a 'virtuous example' by applying its principles at home because the consistency between the actions at home and abroad proves the EU not to be hypocritical in its aspirations (Manners, 2008b: 55-56). Secondly, the procedural normative ethics relies on the degree of how the rules and regulations guiding the EU's external actions are formalized. Furthermore, it suggests that rule-bounded governed behavior combined with public debate and forethought are crucial for sensible action in the international arena. Lastly and most importantly, normative ethics takes into consideration the impact of (EU's) actions, assessing and valuating the specific outcomes and making sure that they are compliant with the pursued values and do not cause harm abroad (Manners, 2008b: 58-59).

On the impact of normative actions, Erik Eriksen has argued that while the motives might be honorable, the polity's normative quality is not fully representable by these motives, but might be rather arbitrary (Eriksen, 2006: 252). This means that while a policy might have good intentions, it might contradict the values and interests of others bringing us to some of the criticism towards the idea of NPE. Adrian Hyde-Price for example has criticized the idea of NPE arguing that instead of being an actor who stands uniquely for the universal norms

and values, the EU is really used by some of its most influential member states as a mechanism for exercising hegemonic power and shaping their geographic neighborhood according to their individual strategic and economic interests (Hyde-Price, 2006: 226-227). In his later work, he remarks ironically that the Europeans have been able to see through the Bush administration's arguments that the 'good' defined by the United States is good for the whole world but fail to realize that similar claims of the EU are equally hypocritical and inconsiderate (Hyde-Price, 2008: 32). Yet, while the concept of normative power has a connotation that the particular norms are 'good', the study itself focuses rather on how these norms have spread around the world, not necessarily whether they are considered to be 'good' everywhere.

Conclusively, the normative basis of the EU rests on its historical development process and motives and uniqueness in the international arena. The norms and principles that the EU has grown to protect and expand are embedded into the foundational treaties. Thus, by principle, the EU is not only responsible for the distribution of these norms, but foremost behaving according to these norms itself. Only then will the final step, studying the impact of the EU influence in the rest of the world, be possible.

The construction of EU normative power

The construction of EU normative power describes what the EU does in the international arena to knowingly pursue spreading particular norms and values. In her article, Michelle Pace has outlined six components of the construction of NPE built around what the EU considers as appropriate action (Pace, 2007: 1044). These components can also help to better understand how the EU is specifically constructing its human rights influence in the world.

The first and perhaps the most vital component of NPE is the *content* (Pace, 2007: 1045) – the substance of what is being advertised and valued by the EU in the world. Pace argues that it can be understood as institutional expressions of the principles that the EU actors are promoting such as rule of law, governance, democracy, human rights, order and justice. In its relations with the other parties, the EU uses this content as a common reference point (Pace, 2007: 1045). The second component to understand is the *process* of NPE construction.

The EU has developed specific mechanisms for pursuing its normative power, including various agreements containing conditionality clauses, such as accession agreements and cooperation agreements. These processes can be best observed in developing and conflict-prone regions, especially in European periphery where the EU is offering financial and humanitarian aid, often in exchange for meeting the conditions based on the very core values of the EU (Pace, 2007: 1046). Another important component of the NPE construction are the *agents* (Pace, 2007: 1049) – the institutions (and in certain contexts the member states) of the EU. The agents are responsible for constructing the NPE image in international settings. Here, different institutions have different roles to play. For example, the Council determines the major policy principles and general guidelines for foreign policy while the Commission is regarded as the main institution for ‘guiding’ the normative principles in their actions. The Parliament largely holds the role of leading discussions and is thus keeping the debates around the defining normative principle alive (Pace, 2007: 1047-1050). For the construction of NPEU in the international arena, it is crucial for the member states to follow and publicly stand for the EU norms and principles also in their individual endeavors to avoid external claims of hypocrisy and challenges to the EU’S international legitimacy (Pace, 2007: 1047-1048).

The fourth component of NPE is the *environment*. As the EU is an international community, it itself is the major environment in which the construction of NPE is framed. The fact that the core norms and principles are embedded in the domestic environment resonates in the international arena and gives the EU more legitimacy abroad (Pace, 2007: 1050). The fifth component are *mechanisms* – the ways in which the EU actors act upon the representation of the EU as a normative power. Broadly defined, this includes dialogues and other diplomatic instruments such as bilateral contracts or policy initiatives in areas related to the key normative principles of the EU such as human rights, border security, trade etc. (Pace, 2007: 1051-1054). The last component of the NPE construction are the overarching *goals* of the EU indicated in the statements of the EU actors, highlighting the values, norms and ideas that the EU stands for and wishes to see in practice around the world. Through such pronouncements, the EU is contributing to the development of its international normative

image (Pace, 2007: 1054). It is worth mentioning here that even the EU itself has accepted the ‘normative power’ label and has used it in his official communication as well as shared topical materials of this field on their web pages (see e.g. European Council, 2019).

As discussed above, the process of normative power turning into practice ultimately consists of three parts: the norms that the whole concept is based on – the very nature of the EU; the way in which the EU is trying to pursue these norms; and the outcome of these activities. The discussed components of the construction of normative power explain the second part of normative power turning into practice – the ways in which the EU is knowingly making an effort to expand its normative influence. When bringing these components to the context of EU normative influence on human rights, the content would be the way that the EU has integrated human rights into its legal documents – the treaties and is using these rights also as a reference point in its relations with the other countries. The processes include for example agreements including human rights clauses that the EU has with its partners, including Jordan which has an association agreement with the EU and Turkey which is an official candidate country to become a member state. The agents of the NPE construction are EU officials and institutions who through their interactions and agreements with Turkey and Jordan, are pursuing the normative influence of the EU in these countries in terms of human rights. Environment is an important component because this entails the real human rights practice within the EU itself. Based on Pace’s assumptions, this would mean that the more the domestic environment in the EU protects human rights, the more likely it is to influence the situation in the partner states. The mechanisms in terms of human rights include the ways in which the EU is responding to the human rights issues and what kind of policies are being implemented to address the topic. As for the goals of normative influence on human rights, it means the articulated objectives of the Union that it wishes to see in other countries, including Turkey and Jordan.

EU normative power and consistency

Having now introduced the concept of normative power, the normative basis of NPE, and the important components of norm construction by the EU, it is necessary to take a step further and discover the literature more specifically focusing to the topic of this thesis. It is important

to establish a connection between NPE, more specifically the human rights promotion aspect of NPE, the human rights rhetoric of the Union and the real human rights practice taking place within the Member States to then be able to assess the impact on the external perceptions of the EU.

As development aid and humanitarian assistance make up a significant part of EU external action, they are crucial to include when analyzing the international identity of the Union (Birchfield, 2011: 142). Although external aid and assistance programs are of main focus here, the assistance system in fact originates from the EU cohesion policies whereby the less wealthy and developed EU regions get more support from the structural funds of the Union (Birchfield, 2011: 143). This is important for the discussion of NPE not only because humanitarian and development aid helps promote and support values such as democracy, the protection of fundamental and human rights etc., but also because of the credibility of EU as a normative actor – not only promoting the norms externally, but also applying them at home. Thus, the external projection of norms and values emphasizing the humanitarian and civilian nature of the EU through the development aid projects is based on the example from within the EU itself (Birchfield, 2011: 149). Vicki Birchfield argues that while EU offering development assistance to other countries and regions is a textbook example of what the EU should be doing, it also clearly serves as a strategy of promoting its norms and values abroad (Birchfield, 2011: 150). This is important to the context of this thesis because the EU is also offering a significant amount of development aid for both human rights protection and refugee protection in Turkey and Jordan. Thus, it proves that the EU is through the promotion of human rights abroad also contributing to its rise as a normative model in the specific issue area in these countries.

Based on the empirical research on the topic using data on EU foreign aid from 1990 to 2003, Birchfield has claimed that in majority of the areas the EU approach to development is consistent with its norms and values and proves to be efficient in terms of global poverty reduction, one of the EU goals driven by its core normative aspirations. Building on these findings, she has argued that the EU development policies represent both the normative form and the empirical function of the idea and praxis of NPE (Birchfield, 2011: 159). With the

allocation of funds and support to the countries which the EU is trying to influence and guide towards its ideals, it is laying the foundation for further change to take place. Thus, donating various types of aid to the third countries serves as one of the most important available mechanisms for the EU to constitute its normative power in the world.

Hypocrisy? Normative power Europe and human rights.

As indicated in previous paragraphs, the failure of the EU to act in line with its external normative promotions is highly likely to jeopardize its chances to be globally perceived as a normative power. Yet, the literature on the inconsistencies in the EU discourses and practice regarding human rights is gradually growing, pointing to the fact that the normative image of the EU in the international arena might be undermined.

In his rather critical assessment of NPE and human rights protection, Mauro Gatti has argued that while the external promotion of human rights is one of the key elements defining the international identity of the EU, the latter lacks capabilities to also promote these rights internally. Thus, the EU is contributing to defining what is considered to be normal at the international level, but not as much within Europe itself (Gatti, 2016: 300). This has been an issue for example in the context of protecting national minority rights in which some of the EU member states do not have the cleanest track record in, although it has even been an accession requirement to the EU since 1990 and is also embedded into the Copenhagen Criteria. Compliance with this criteria is among other laws being assessed based on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. However, Belgium, Greece and Luxembourg have not ratified this Convention thus in principle not abiding to the normative rules that are being keenly imposed on others (Gatti, 2016: 302). Furthermore, Gatti shows in his work how there are some policies on human rights issues that the EU is promoting abroad, that are technically protected within the member states, but are interpreted in different ways thus implying that certain restrictions to human rights can be tolerable. This is for example the issue with freedom of expression and has been especially important in the context of matters regarding religious expression in the post-9/11 time (Gatti, 2016: 303-304).

Hypocrisy and inconsistencies between the EU human rights talk and practices at home have a clear effect on how the rest of the world perceives the EU. Whether it is living up to the self-imposed international and universal standards defines the extent to which the EU is seen as a normative model abroad. For this particular reason, it is especially important to study NPE in relation to the external perceptions of the EU and establish a strong link between the two fields of literature. If the real practices of the EU do not fall in line with its own rhetoric, moreover, with its own laws written in the treaties, it is hardly likely that the external perceptions of the EU will be positive in regard of seeing it as a credible and honest actor. The specific implication of this to the topic of the thesis would be that if the EU who is putting significant effort through its overall human rights rhetoric, agreements and even specified aid to promote human rights in Turkey and Jordan, does not itself live up to its own expected standards, it will likely be perceived by Turkey and Jordan as insincere or even straightforward hypocritical.

The missing link: Normative power Europe and external perceptions literature

While recognition by others might not necessarily be needed for great powers, it is unquestionably vital to the agency of normative powers. Although they can be regarded as ‘self-made international actors’, normative powers require a certain degree of voluntary acceptance by the others in order to really claim themselves as such. This means that the relationships between normative powers and other international actors unlike with great powers are significantly more dialogical (Kavalski, 2013: 249). The concept of normative power as such requires recognition by the external actors. Otherwise, the essence of the concept would entail only claims about oneself and ones ideal aspirations but would lack any connection to being a power or in other words, an influencer in international terms. Emilian Kavalski has argued that normative power ultimately emerges as power in context meaning that it is not merely an internal property of an actor but depends on the interactions that this actor has in different contexts (Kavalski, 2013: 250). This idea has also been introduced by Reinhard Wolf who suggested that what is most important is not the perceptions and misperceptions of the external actors, but the subjective expectations and understandings of these actors which are strongly affected by cultural sceneries (Wolf, 2011: 113). This means

that it is the incidental context of each specific interaction that drives an external actor to see its' partners behavior as normative or not. Therefore, normative power is not only about affecting the perceptions of the external actors, but mainly about framing the responses of these actors (Kavalski, 2013: 250). Erik Ringmar has taken this idea even a step further by arguing that "the reaction is far more important than the action itself and their reaction is what the exercise of power ultimately seeks to influence" (Ringmar, 2012: 19). Thus, the EU is strongly motivated by a desire to be recognized as an actor that is not only capable, but also has the right to set the guidelines of what is considered to be normal in the world. Furthermore, Kavalski argues that since recognition is indicated by the attitudes, dispositions and behaviors of the target states, the actors who politically exist as normative powers are actually only the ones that are recognized as such by the target states (Kavalski, 2013: 258).

The precondition for the EU to be considered a normative power is the outside world attributing that specific role to it (Larsen, 2014a: 897). The studies of external perceptions offer certain findings that are not merely relevant, but central to the debate of NPE. Furthermore, the external perceptions literature (EPL) in fact points to a rather limited perception of the EU as a normative power depending on the specific geographic area (Larsen, 2014a: 896). Similarly to Kavalski and Ringmar above, Henrik Larsen claims that the fields of NPE and EPL are in theoretical terms tightly related and it is surprising that the connections between the two have not really been addressed by many scholars. He admits that while references to NPE can at times be found in the literature on external perceptions, the opposite (references to external perceptions in NPE literature) is hardly common (Larsen, 2014a: 896).

As also visible from above, majority of the work on normative power focuses on the *exercise* of power. Meanwhile, little is written about the wider structural context that leads the external world to the adoption of the imposed norms. Larsen suggests that in order to really see whether the EU influences conceptions of what is normal in the international arena, one should be guided by a more structural conception of power – "power of an actor that looks at the context of meaning in which the actor is embedded" (Larsen, 2014a: 899). After all, power in political science is often theorized through relative relations between actors: Dahl

(1957) for example has suggested that power is the ability of A to get B to do something that B would not have done otherwise. Barach and Baratz (1963) have argued that power is the ability of A to control the agenda in order to influence B's opportunities. The third dimension of power is A's power to shape the beliefs and desires of B in order to get the latter to behave in compliance with what A wants (Lukes, 2005: 486). Based on these definitions of power, it is not possible to assess normative power as well without studying the real impact of EU's behavior and the perceptions that are formed outside of the Union. Thus, when studying the normative impact of the EU in terms of human rights protection, it is crucial to include the external perceptions or the target countries of such promotion, such as Turkey and Jordan to see the real impact of this normative promotion.

For the EU to have the status of a normative power either regionally or globally, the other international actors must perceive the EU as playing a special role as a beacon of norms. If that is not the case or is only the case to a limited extent, it is not likely that the EU will be able to influence the conceptions of what is normal through the use of normative power. However, it is also possible that the EU is considered a normative power in just one specific region or context. Furthermore, if the norms that the EU is trying to promote internationally match up with the dominant normative discourses in other parts of the world, it is more likely to be perceived as a normative leader (Larsen, 2014a: 900). There are two major reasons for why the EPL has not really taken up on the concept of NPE. First, the debate on NPE has been described to be too internal and isolated from other branches of European Studies and secondly, it has been criticized for its claims that the EU's normative power is a result of spreading the universal values while the EPL rather suggests that the EU is shaping its own normative setting through specific political actions and that the perceptions of the external actions are important for defining what type of an international actor the EU is (Larsen, 2014a: 901). As the primary focus of this thesis is on the external perceptions of the EU and the secondary focus on the effect of these perceptions on EU's normative image, it is hereby important to also give an extensive overview of the external perceptions literature – its main importance in the study of international relations and more specifically EU as well as means for studying it and the findings that have surfaced from the studies of EPL scholars so far.

This is important for mapping the road for how to study the external perceptions of the EU in terms of its human rights rhetoric and practice and furthermore, on how this would connect to the perception of the EU as a normative model on human rights.

1.2. External perceptions of the European Union

The external perceptions literature on the EU is a rather new field of literature that has developed throughout the past two decades, mostly in parallel with the development of the normative power literature. It offers both theoretical and empirical knowledge on the issue: how the external perceptions are shaped, how they can be measured and what kind of external perceptions of the Union have surfaced from the existing empirical studies. The existing literature on external perceptions of the EU offers a perspective to the factors which might affect how the EU is perceived as a model on human rights and migration, what are the possible methods for studying this topic and what kind of dynamics in the external perceptions can be expected based on the earlier findings in the field.

In line with some of the ideas from Henrik Larsen that I have introduced above, Natalia Chaban and Ole Elgström agree that outsiders' perceptions of the EU are the key to the impact that the Union has internationally. In their work, they have presented a conceptual foundation for the study of external perceptions with explanations on why such field of study is relevant and what kind of connections the study of external perceptions has to other theoretical constructs such as legitimacy and credibility but also the study of EU coherence (Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 17). Elgström and Chaban argue that the analysis of the external perceptions of the EU is vital because, first of all, it contributes to the insight we have about the EU's self-identification and the roles that it plays in world politics. Secondly, it offers an understanding of how those roles influence the impact that EU policies have on the external actors (Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 17-18). They suggest that the outcome of EU actions is shaped by how credible, legitimate and coherent it is perceived by the others, claiming that it is complicated to be a leader if the promises are not properly backed up by the actions. In other words, they argue that perceived incoherence between what is said and done as well as among EU institutions is likely to create obstacles to the effective actions of the Union (Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 18). This directly matters for being perceived as a model by the

external actors because the inconsistency between rhetoric and practice has a negative impact on the external perceptions, thus leading to a lower possibility of being considered a model worth imitating. Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler as well have noted that the connection between internal consistency and coherence and the perceptions of the European Commission carry great importance (Bretherton & Vogler, 2005: 45). Similarly, Christopher Hill's concept of the capabilities-expectations gap is strongly based on the external perceptions, focusing on the mismatch between the hopes external actors have for the EU in the international arena and its limited capabilities to meet these hopes (Hill, 1993). This leads us to the assumption that in case of internal inconsistencies and perceived lack of legitimacy of the EU in regard of human rights, the external actors will not perceive the EU to be a positive example or moreover, a model on human rights.

On the opposite, Michito Tsuruoka has suggested that also the expectations deficit – the lack of expectations to the EU from external actors – is equally important to address (Tsuruoka, 2008: 7-8). Either way, such expectations might be dangerous to the success of the EU and deserve to be studied in more detail. The lack of expectations to the EU might be bad for the success of the Union because it might indicate that the EU is a weak actor who is not expected to act notably and thus is not expected to have an impact on the rest of the world to begin with. However, it has been noted by prominent scholars who have contributed to the EPL that there is still a relative lack of theoretical studies in this area (Chaban et al., 2006: 246; Lucarelli & Fioramonti, 2010: 3) and thus a need for more such studies in the field (Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 20; Lucarelli & Fioramonti, 2010: 3). This means that while there is not much theoretical material on the field available yet, this thesis will offer an additional valuable contribution to the study of external perceptions of the EU.

How are external perceptions shaped? Endogenous and exogenous factors.

Before getting to the study of external perceptions as such, it is first important to discuss the sources and influential factors of such perceptions. Tsuruoka (2008) has divided the factors influencing the formation of external perceptions of the EU into two categories: exogenous (external) and endogenous (internal) ones. The categorization of endogenous and exogenous sources stems from the perspective of the external actors. This means that the influence that

the state of the EU with the successes and failures it has on the third parties is considered to be an exogenous factor while the factors within these third countries, such as domestic political situation which is not directly related to what the EU is doing are endogenous factors (Tsuruoka, 2008: 9-10). Out of the exogenous factors, it is a general rule that the success of the EU tends to provoke more positive perceptions of it and raise the reputation of the EU in the world. On the opposite, the failures tend to generate skeptical viewpoints and thus might damage the EU's international position (Tsuruoka, 2008: 9). Exogenous factors that have successfully boosted positive external perceptions of the EU include, for example, the establishment of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, the enlargement and the launching of the single currency. On the other hand, failures leading to negative perceptions include for example the disability to act and speak in a common voice in the international arena and the relative economic underperformance of the Eurozone (Tsuruoka, 2008: 10).

The endogenous factors are strongly dependent on the domestic discourses in the third states, thus for example the perceptions of the EU might be low in countries which perceive themselves to be superior to the EU, or countries which have different primary values, such as a strong support for military power (Tsuruoka, 2008: 9) or a diverse understanding of human rights, such as the US and China respectively. At the same time, the external perceptions of the EU are likely to be high if the domestic socio-political discourses support the European values (Tsuruoka, 2008: 9). In any case, the EU has little influence over the endogenous factors and thus needs to be careful about the unexpected external perceptions that might form abroad based on these factors (Tsuruoka, 2008: 13-15). The interplay between the exogenous and endogenous sources of perceptions is unique in every case study (Chaban et al., 2013: 447). This is why, when studying external perceptions about the EU, it is important to pay attention to all the possibly relevant factors within the external case study country in addition to the factors within the EU. With this distinction, it becomes possible to study what shapes perceptions of the EU – endogenous or exogenous factors. Therefore, when studying the external perceptions related to human rights practices in the EU, it is also crucial to map out any other possible endogenous and exogenous factors which may have an effect on these perceptions in Turkey and Jordan and try to control for such variables.

How to measure external perceptions? Elites, public and media.

While it is clear that the external perceptions of the EU hold a great significance, they can be rather difficult to measure, especially if we are talking about the perceptions of states since there are various units that the states consist of: the individuals, social groups, state institutions, private organizations, leaders etc. Scholars (e.g. Chaban et al., 2013; Entman, 2003; Elgström & Chaban, 2015) contributing to the EPL have broadly defined three layers of external perceptions: elite, media and public opinion. Below, the thesis will introduce each of these layers, give an overview of their importance in shaping the external perceptions and offer examples of how these layers have been studied by academics in the field so far.

The ideas which are relevant to foreign policy get activated and spread from the higher levels of the system to the lower ones, from the top level of a layered system to the network of elites, news organizations and through them the wider public (Entman, 2003: 415). This model is called ‘cascade activation’ and works not only from the top down, but also from the bottom up because the media also works as a pumping mechanism making discourses from the lower levels heard by the higher ones (Entman, 2003; Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 24). The media is helping the least powerful group – the public – to activate and spread the foreign policy ideas and offer feedback to the elites and higher administrations. Ideally, an external perceptions study should take into account the perceptions on all of these layers (Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 24), however, this level of comprehensiveness is often difficult to achieve.

Several important studies in the field have focused largely on images of the EU among national decision-, policy- and opinion makers within the third countries (e.g. Elgström & Chaban, 2015; Elgström, 2010; Chaban et al., 2013). Based on Entman’s three-layered argument, this would be the highest layer of the three. As for methodologies, the focus has generally been on semi-structured elites and face-to-face interviews (Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 25). Somewhat differently however, Ole Elgström has investigated external perceptions among international negotiators in various multilateral settings. Although his study is also mainly based on semi-structured elite interviews, it is improved by including studies of EU appearances that have surfaced in media discourses, official documents and the talk of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Elgström, 2010; 2014). In addition to

semi-structured interviews with elites, focus-group interviews have also proved to be efficient in certain studies (Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 25). As conducting interviews with high-level officials in Turkey and Jordan would be out of reach for this study, official speeches and statements of leaders will be analyzed instead to figure out the official perceptions of the two countries.

The images among the general public have been rather under-addressed in the field of EU external perception studies. However, their importance should not be disregarded as previously explained in the introduction of the term cascade activation. The general impressions of the public or in other words, the civil society, is considered to be the lowest layer of the three-layered system. When studying the perceptions of the public, majority of the studies are based on survey data because this methodology allows gathering information from the large masses (Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 26-27). However, in the case of this study, the perceptions of the civil society with a special focus on the NGOs working with refugees will be examined through semi-structured interviews in order to get more focused and detailed information on the issue.

As explained above, media can be considered to be the cross-section between the levels of public and elite, present both in the foreign policy ideas moving from top to bottom and the opposite. In other words, media is the middle layer of the three-layered system. Methodologically, research on this level relies on content analysis based on data from print or television news and social media (Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 27). As the preliminary findings on the topic of this thesis did not show sufficient available data on the external perceptions of the EU in Turkey's and Jordan's news media regarding the Union's human rights practices, including the analysis of this layer in the study would not be justified.

As a general summary of the introduced levels of EU external perceptions studies, Elgström and Chaban have noted that the perceptions are “the most informed, nuanced, multifaceted and dynamic” (Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 28) on the level of elites while the general public has showed slightly colder and slower changing image of the Union. For this study, it would mean that in case of inconsistencies between EU human rights rhetoric and practice, the

leaders perceptions would have changed more drastically than the perceptions of the civil society.

Issue and region specificity in the external perceptions studies.

The existing scholarship on EU external perceptions is lacking systematic investigation on whether the perceptions are varying in different issue areas. Elgström, Chaban and other prominent scholars of EPL have claimed that majority of the studies in the field only present a one-dimensional picture of the EU as a leader while it is actually likely that it might be considered a great leader or power in one area or region and the opposite in another one (Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 29; Chaban et al., 2013: 433). They argue that external perceptions are issue specific, multilayered and differentiated (Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 29; Chaban et al., 2013: 433). For this study it means that any kind of perceptions of the EU related to its human rights practice or treatment of migrants do not necessarily have to be the same in other issue areas. In other words, negative perceptions of the EU in terms of a normative model on human rights or migration do not necessarily mean that the EU is perceived negatively in general or in any other specific issue areas.

Natalia Chaban and her colleagues have noticed that there are scholars who see the EU as a great power or even a superpower, such as Reid, Schnabel and McCormick whereas many academics such as Zielonka and Menon have observed the EU oppositely – to be divided, weak and a declining power (Chaban et al., 2013: 435). It is suggested that the strong variation in these images is at least partly caused by the fact that the thematic focus of the studies has been different. It seems to be a trend that the studies focused on EU's economic and commercial potency often show the great-powerfulness of the Union while the weak-power conception has been suggested by scholars focusing on EU security policy and the diplomatic failures. However, there is also an 'in between' to these two extremes: some academics have regarded the EU as a civilian, ethical or normative power or simply as a developmental actor based on various factors (Chaban et al., 2013: 435). The issue specific perceptions are in turn also dependent on the regions, for example in the eastern neighbors such as Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, the EU is often perceived to be a

normative leader whereas several big rising powers such as Brazil, China, Russia and India do not perceive the EU as such (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012).

Thus, when studying external perceptions of the EU, it is important to acknowledge that the findings are likely to be dependent on the specific issue area or geographic regions and should not be carelessly generalized. Doing the latter is likely to give ground to incomplete or even false assumptions of the EU and does not represent good research credibility. Moreover, when studying effects of the EU human rights practice and treatment of migrants, it means that this study can make conclusions only on that specific topic.

Existing studies and findings on EU external perceptions.

In his review of the external perceptions literature on the EU, Henrik Larsen has come to five major conclusions of the findings. First, he has observed a general finding that while the EU is widely seen as an international actor across various issue areas, it is not perceived as a great power in all the fields. The second observation is that the predominant perception of the EU is that of an international economic power. Third, Larsen has reflected that the Union is perceived to be playing a distinct role in global politics. The fourth observation constitutes that the EU is seldom seen as a prominent international actor who has influence in the field of development. And last, Larsen claims based on the existing studies that the EU is mostly not seen as a normative power as it is defined by Ian Manners (Larsen, 2014b: 13).

The latter is especially alarming from the perspective of the EU who in its core values and actions in the international arena clearly pursues towards the generally accepted image of itself as a normative power. Larsen admits that the EU may still be a normative power in certain regions and contexts while not in others but emphasizes that it is vital for the external actors to approve its normative role in the world for it to fully exist (Larsen, 2014b: 14). He suggests that one of the reasons for the existence of such gap between EU's self-perception and the external images of it might be a communication deficit between the two (Larsen, 2014b: 15). In any case, the dominant external perceptions of the EU confirm that the Union has a potential of being perceived as a leader and a significant power in the world. However, it is facing several challenges on realizing this potential, such as the communication gap with

the rest of the world and the internal inconsistencies weakening the legitimacy and coherence of the Union. The latter factor, as I have also discussed in more depth above in the subchapter of normative power EU, is what enables the EU to come off as a normative model or perhaps even normative power in the international arena. While the existing literature on external perceptions shows that more often than not the EU is not perceived as a normative power in the rest of the world, the findings of the studies are rather general and have not fully focused on specific issue areas, regions and most importantly reasons behind such cold and distant perceptions.

The existing studies in EPL have primarily focused on the perceptions of the EU in big states, many of which are often perceived to be superpowers such as the US, China, India, Brazil and Russia (e.g. Barcevičius et al., 2015) or states in regions such as the Pacific, Southeast Asia and Africa (e.g. Chaban et al., 2013). The common theme among these studies is that while they are in a way focusing on specific issue areas such as the EU as an ‘economic actor’ or ‘ideological actor’ (Lucarelli & Fioramonti, 2010), there is a gap in the literature addressing more specific areas for external perceptions, such as the perceptions of the EU as a human rights actor/protector. Additionally, there is also a lack of studies of the external perceptions of the EU in Middle-Eastern countries such as Turkey and Jordan. Lucarelli and Fioramonti (2010) have studied the EU mediation role in the region using the case studies of Iran and Lebanon, which is one of the few EU external perceptions study in the region. However, it does not touch upon EU as a normative power or model on human rights.

Natalia Chaban and Ana-Maria Magdalina have studied the relationship between the Eurozone sovereign debt crisis and perceptions of the EU regarding its soft or normative power and claimed that the crisis has been seen to damage the image of the Union as an ‘economic powerhouse’, thus having a negative effect on its image of normative power (Chaban & Magdalina, 2014: 195). This connection gives ground to an assumption that when the EU is failing in one of the areas it is expected to be successful and exemplary at, its normative power in the world decreases. An extensive study from 2015 by Barcevičius and his colleagues also reveals that while the EU was often perceived to carry normative features in association to human rights, the EU’s actions regarding human rights related to the

refugees received rather negative comments and triggered doubts about the applicability of EU norms in that specific context (Barcevičius et al., 2015: 19).

This chapter has insofar shown what it means to be a normative power, how it is constructed and how it relates to external perceptions. The introduced theoretical arguments suggest that the ability of the EU to shape the normality in the international arena can only work in reality if it is perceived by the others in a way that they see the EU as a normative model or an example worth following. While the EU is trying to construct its normative power through various means including its normative basis – the treaties, it is not likely to work out unless the EU itself also acts in accordance with its very own norms. Otherwise, the theory suggests that the EU would be seen as illegitimate or hypocritical, both of which undermine the perception of the EU as a desirable normative model. In the context of studying external perceptions of the EU related to its human rights rhetoric and practice, it is clear that if the EU human rights practice falls behind the standards that the Union itself has embedded in its treaties, promised to protect and promote in the rest of the world, the EU will lose its credibility as a normative model on human rights. In other words, it is expected that if there are inconsistencies between the EU human rights rhetoric and practice, the EU will not be perceived as a model on human rights in the rest of the world.

2. Methodology

This chapter will outline the methodology of the thesis.

2.1. Case selection and research design

To study the external perceptions of the EU and to identify the effect that the EU human rights practice has on these perceptions, a comparative case study of two cases will be conducted applying the most different systems design (MDS). Controlled comparison of two different topically relevant cases helps to control for the possible intervening endogenous and exogenous variables that might affect the external perceptions of the EU and allows to study the direct effect of the consistency of EU human rights rhetoric and practice.

The chosen case studies: Turkey and Jordan are selected for four reasons. First of all, they are both major refugee hosting states themselves, thus inarguably in need and interest of solutions on how to respond to the large volumes of incoming migrants. As discussed above, the existing literature suggests that it is possible to best observe external perceptions of the EU in countries that interact with the EU in issue areas that are of high relevance to themselves (Chaban et al., 2013; Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012). Second, these two countries are both geographically on the Eastern Mediterranean Migration Route towards the EU¹, calling for strategic cooperation and shared approaches on the issue. Third, Turkey and Jordan are particularly relevant case studies because of the EU's efforts to have these states pay more attention to human rights (European Commission). Following from this, the EU has an interest in projecting normative power to these countries. The fourth reason for choosing these case studies is the lack of existing literature, especially focused on the issue area of migration, on the external perceptions of the EU in these countries despite their geographical location in the close proximity of the Union. Thus, by focusing on these specific cases, this research will contribute to the EPL from an angle that has not yet been discussed and directly answers to the calls of prominent EU external perceptions scholars

¹ IOM. The World's Congested Human Migration Routes in 5 Maps. Available at <https://weblog.iom.int/world%E2%80%99s-congested-human-migration-routes-5-maps> (Last accessed 12.02.2021).

who have pointed out the necessity for further studies in the field (Chaban et al., 2006: 246; Elgström & Chaban, 2015: 20; Lucarelli & Fioramonti, 2010: 3).

The time frame of the empirical case study is from the peak of the European migrant crisis in 2015 until the time of writing this thesis in late 2020. This time frame is chosen because it is the time during which a specific type of migration approach – the use of hotspot refugee reception facilities has been used on the borders of the EU in Greece and Italy. In other words, focusing on this time period is essential for the framing of the independent variable of the thesis – the consistency of EU human rights rhetoric and the human rights practice within the hotspot refugee camps. Second, this means that it is the time frame during which we can expect to see consequences of the expected discrepancies between the EU human rights talk and practices. Furthermore, this is the maximum possible timeframe for the study given that it covers the whole European migration crisis, thus giving as much time as possible to identify the discrepancies and their effect. The consistency of the EU human rights rhetoric and practice will be measured on a nominal scale, with two options: consistent and inconsistent.

It is expected that if there is inconsistency between the EU human rights rhetoric and practice, it will result in a decline of perceiving the EU as a normative model on human rights protection and migration both in Turkey and Jordan, thus confirming the effect of the consistency of EU human rights rhetoric and practice on the external perceptions of the Union. The dependent variable of the study – external perceptions of the EU will be measured on an ordinal scale, examining whether the perceptions of the EU as a normative model on human rights protection and migration have turned more positive, more negative or have not changed.

The study is controlling for three intervening factors that might shape how the EU human rights practice reflects in the external perceptions of the EU in order to isolate the effect of human rights practice on the perceptions. The controlled variables of the research (presented in Table 1) include two exogenous (from the perspective of the case study countries) variables and one variable that has both endogenous and exogenous characteristics. The exogenous variables are EU humanitarian aid for refugee aid per refugee and EU funding for human rights promotion per capita. Both of these variables are crucial to control for as the

literature on normative power and development aid has suggested that the latter is a key element for the EU to exercise its normative power abroad and gain support to as well as simply spread its normative ambitions around the world (Birchfield, 2011). While Turkey and Jordan are both major refugee hosting states in the EU neighborhood, the magnitude of EU humanitarian aid for refugee aid per refugee that the Union has allocated to these states varies remarkably, standing at approximately 694€ in Turkey and 4,103€ in Jordan (per person). On the other hand, EU funding for human rights promotion per capita in Turkey is nearly a third higher than it is in Jordan. This means that based on the EU refugee aid per refugee, it would be expected to see Jordan having more positive external perceptions of the EU while based on the EU funding for human rights promotion per capita, Turkey should have more positive external perceptions of the Union.

The controlled variable that has both exogenous and endogenous characteristics is called the state of general political relations with the EU and refers to an overall level of mutual understanding, cooperation and conflictual situations regarding political decisions and views. Previous studies on external perceptions of the EU have shown that the countries holding a colder relationship with the EU tend not to see it as a normative power while the ones with warm and positive relations are more likely to see it as one (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012). In line with the MDSD, this variable shows different results for Turkey and Jordan. The political relations between Turkey and the EU have been mostly negative following the failed attempts of making progress for achieving EU membership and the military coup attempt in July 2016 (Vatandaş, 2019). On the other hand, the relationship between Jordan and the EU has been friendly and positive with ever tighter cooperation within the same time frame (Europa Nu, 2017). This would suggest that the external perceptions of the EU in Jordan are more positive than in Turkey.

The aforementioned variables are important to control for as all of them have the potential to influence the external perceptions of the EU as a model on migration and human rights protection. Using the MDSD research design ensures that all of these variables show different results in the case study states, thus ruling out the possibility of them having the main impact on the dependent variable of the study – external perceptions of the EU. All variables of the

study are presented in Table 1 with controlled variables indicated on a blue background, independent variable on the yellow background and the dependent variable on the red background.

Variable	Turkey	Jordan
EU humanitarian aid for refugee aid (per refugee)	low (~ 694€) ²	high (~ 4,103€) ³
EU funding for human rights promotion (per capita)	high (~ 0,73€) ⁴	low (~ 0,26 €) ⁵
The state of general political relations with the EU	mostly negative	mostly positive
Consistency of EU human rights practice (independent variable)	no	no
(Expected decline of) perceiving EU as a normative model on migration and human rights protection (dependent variable)	yes	yes

Table 1. Variables of the study.

² European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. Turkey. Available at https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/europe/turkey_en (Last accessed 12.05.2021).

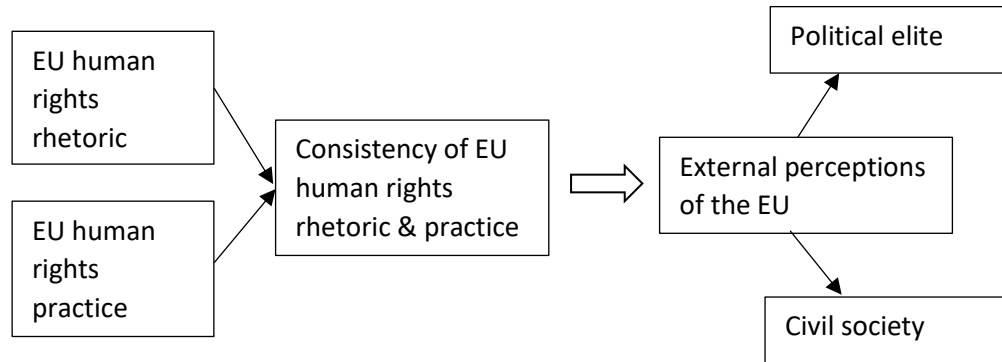
³ European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. Jordan. Available at https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/middle-east/jordan_en (Last accessed 12.05.2021).

⁴ Delegation of the European Union to Turkey. The EU and Human Rights. Available at <https://www.avrupa.info.tr/en/eu-and-human-rights-767> (Last accessed 12.05.2021).

⁵ Delegation of the European Union to Jordan. Jordan and the European Union. Available at https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/jordan/1357/jordan-and-european-union_en (Last accessed 12.05.2021).

2.2. Research methods used in the thesis

The thesis first analyzes the EU human rights consistency by comparing the EU human rights rhetoric and practice. The second part of the analysis studies the external perceptions of the EU based on the (in)consistency of the EU human rights rhetoric and practice by studying the perceptions of political elite and civil society. These steps are visualized on Graph 1.



Graph 1. The structure of the analysis.

To gather data for the independent variable of the thesis – consistency of EU human rights practice, the human rights conditions in the hotspot first reception facilities in Italy and Greece will be assessed and compared to the relevant EU human rights documents to search for possible inconsistencies. To study the human rights conditions in the hotspots, the study will conduct a document analysis of two reports conducted by the FRA during the designated time period of the research: in 2016 and 2019. The conditions and related human rights gaps in the hotspot facilities will be compared to relevant articles of the EU human rights documents such as the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and specific regulations and directives of the EU on the treatment of migrants and refugees. Based on the comparison of the relevant EU law and the data on human rights conditions in the hotspots, the thesis will be able to put forward an argument on whether there is inconsistency between the EU human rights rhetoric and practice.

The methods used for measuring the dependent variable – external perceptions of the EU, include content analysis of the leaders speeches and statements, and semi-structured interviews with representatives of the civil society in Turkey and Jordan. Data gathered

through these two methods will be complementary to each other and enable to provide a thorough analysis of the external perceptions of the EU as a model on human rights and migration.

Content analysis will be used in the study because it is a highly flexible research method and a systematic, thorough approach to analyzing documents which have been obtained in the course of research (White & Marsh, 2006: 41). The steps of content analysis include sampling, collecting, analyzing and reporting (White & Marsh, 2006: 29). The process of qualitative content analysis is driven by the research question and the hypothesis of the study. Reading through the collected data will help the researcher to identify concepts and patterns which have been foreshadowed or are unexpected and thus provide new important aspects to consider (White & Marsh, 2006: 34). The analysis of new cases will continue until no new patterns related to the studied concept emerge, leading to the presumption that all relevant patterns have been discovered (White & Marsh, 2006: 37). Thus, qualitative content analysis is suitable for this thesis because it allows to explore in depth all the emerging perceptions of the political elites through close analysis of their statements.

Semi-structured interviews will be used for studying the external perceptions of the civil society representatives because this method allows for retrieving information directly from the interviewees through open-ended directed questions. This method is perfect for a small-*n* sample to explore the independent thoughts of the individuals in the sample (Adams, 2015: 493-494). Semi-structured interviews allow for a dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee with the option of asking follow-up questions and discovering unforeseen issues on the topic that is being studied (Adams, 2015: 493). The steps of semi-structured interviews include preparation of the questions outline, planning and setting up the interviews, conducting the interviews, taking notes, transcribing and analyzing the interview content, thus making it a time-consuming method. However, it offers more benefits than for example a questionnaire which would not allow for further explanations or a focus group interview which might keep the interviewees from extensively sharing their honest opinions. Thus, semi-structured interviews offer the best way to explore the external perceptions of the civil society representatives.

The speeches and statements of the leaders – Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the president of Turkey and Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein, the king of Jordan were retrieved from their respective websites⁶⁷. The sample of the speeches and statements was collected by using the key word ‘European Union’ in the search engine of both of the websites’ ‘speeches and statements’ English language section for the time period of 1 January 2015 until 13 April 2021 (the date of starting the analysis of the speeches and statements). The key word ‘European Union’ had to be included either in the title or the full text of the speech or statement to be included in the sample. Altogether 175 results from the chosen time period came up by using the key word from Erdoğan’s speeches and statements and 74 results from King Abdullah II’s speeches and statements. All of these speeches were then examined by searching for further key words ‘refugee’ and ‘human rights’ within them to find the speeches and statements touching upon topics relevant for the analysis of this thesis. Out of the original sample, 30 speeches and statements by President Erdoğan and 14 speeches by King Abdullah II were chosen for use of the final analysis, following the principle of data saturation. The chosen speeches and statements were selected for giving the best insights into the leaders’ perceptions on the EU in regard to human rights and migration.

The semi-structured interviews for measuring the external perceptions of the EU in Turkey and Jordan were conducted with nine NGO representatives from these countries, five from Turkey and four from Jordan. The interviewees were found through directly contacting NGOs that work with refugees and further through their personal and professional networks. All the interviewees are representatives of local NGOs working with the refugees in the case study countries. The five representatives from Turkey altogether represent three different NGOs in Turkey and the four representatives from Jordan represent three different NGOs in Jordan. The interviewees were provided with a consent form (see Annex 2) before the interview and agreed to it orally in the beginning of the interview. Out of the nine interviewees, eight agreed to the interview being recorded for the purpose of writing the thesis. The recordings of the interviews were deleted once the transcriptions were made. The

⁶ Presidency of the Republic of Turkey. Available at <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/>.

⁷ His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussein. Available at <https://kingabdullah.jo/en>.

interviewees were also offered a possibility to see the outline of the interview questions ahead of the interview upon their request. All of the nine interviewees used this opportunity. The interview outline (see Annex 1) included eight questions regarding the interviewees' awareness of EU human rights rhetoric and practices, and their perceptions of the EU as a human rights model. Additionally, some questions asked about the treatment of refugees in the EU hotspot refugee reception facilities and the perceptions of the EU as a model on migration and treatment of refugees, especially in comparison to the case study countries. The interviews took place over Zoom meetings between April 23, 2021 and May 7, 2021. The exact dates and times of the interviews are presented in Annex 3.

This chapter has introduced the research plan and methods of the thesis as well as described the data which will be used for studying EU human rights rhetoric and practice and the external perceptions of the EU in Turkey and Jordan. The next chapter will apply the introduced methods on the data, thus enabling to answer the research question of the study and testing the posed hypothesis.

3. European Union Human Rights Rhetoric and Practice

This chapter of the thesis provides insights to the human rights rhetoric of the EU based on the key legal documents related to the field. The chapter then goes on to findings of the analysis of the human rights practice in reality in the hotspot refugee and migrant reception facilities in Greece and Italy in 2016 and 2019 and concludes with an analysis of the consistency between the rhetoric and practice.

3.1. European Union human rights rhetoric

The EU human rights rhetoric has been deeply embedded into the treaties of the Union alongside with the emphasis on democratic governance and solidarity. Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) claims that the Union “is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights” (TEU, 1992). Additionally, Article 3 of TEU states that “In its relations with the wider world, the Union shall uphold and promote its values and interests and contribute to the protection of its citizens” (TEU, 1992), while also specifically stating that it will contribute to the protection of human rights in the world. The main documents constituting the EU human rights rhetoric are the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFREU, year) and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR, 1952).co Additionally, in the context of the topic of the thesis it is useful to apply certain articles from the Geneva Convention of 1951 (UN General Assembly, 1951) and the Protocol of 1967 Relating to the Status of Refugees (UN General Assembly, 1967), which have been ratified by 149 countries over the world, including all of the EU Member States (UNHCR). The specific articles of the mentioned legal documents will be discussed in the after next section focusing on the EU human rights practices in the hotspot migration reception facilities.

In every five years, the Council of the European Union composes a new EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy laying out the strategic framework and planned activities to further strengthen the protection of human rights both within the EU and abroad. The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for 2015-2019 (Council of the European Union, 2015) covers most of the period that the thesis is focusing on. In the document, the

EU reaffirms its commitment both to the protection and promotion of all human rights without distinguishing between the type of rights and calls all the states in the world to ratify and implement the requirements of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Council of the European Union, 2015: 9). It also mentions Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union by which the EU has committed itself to promote human rights through all its external actions and furthermore, states that the EU and its Member States are committed to set an example in ensuring respect for human rights (Council of the European Union, 2015: 10). This would mean that in their behavior, the EU as a whole, including all its institutions – and specialized agencies who deal with migrants and asylum seekers at the EU external borders, as well as the Member States, should always keep in mind the protection of human rights and avoid any breaches in the field – first, because of their commitments for the sake of human rights themselves and second, in order to be seen as the positive example.

As a follow-up to the commitment of being an example on human rights, the action plan also states that “The EU seeks to prevent violations of human rights throughout the world and, where violations occur, to ensure that victims have access to justice and redress and that those responsible are held to account.” (Council of the European Union, 2015: 10). For achieving that, the EU takes upon a promise to promote human rights throughout all its external relations, strengthen its capability and mechanisms to use an ‘early warning system’ to prevent crises that might possibly lead to human rights violations and strengthen its cooperation with partners around the world, including other states, international organizations and the civil society (Council of the European Union, 2015: 10).

Of particular relevance to this thesis is that the action plan specifically emphasizes among other social groups and minorities, the EU’s commitment to protect the rights of refugees and migrants (Council of the European Union, 2015: 10). The fourth main objective of the action plan titled “Fostering Better Coherence and Consistency” lists a sub-objective number 24 focusing on migration, trafficking in human beings, smuggling of migrants and asylum policies. It consists of seven actions which are noted to be the responsibility of the European External Action Service (EEAS), European Commission and the Member States. Some of the most outstanding of these actions for the topic of the thesis include enhancing human

rights safeguards in every migration and mobility related dialogue, cooperation framework with third countries, migration related process and program and to ensure the introduction to human rights protection elements to the immigration and border agencies (Council of the European Union, 2015: 37). This means that the EU personnel dealing with migrants at the EU's external borders is committed to these standards as well. With specific mention to the processes related to migration, this action thus also directly related to the EU hotspot approach which will be explained in the next section of the thesis. Another action worth mentioning is to support even better access to justice and health for migrants both in their countries of origin and the countries that they move through while in transit; to promote enhanced conditions of detention to the migrants and in general to find alternatives to the use or regular detention for irregular migrants. Furthermore, the action puts focus on paying more attention to vulnerable migrants, including unaccompanied minors (Council of the European Union, 2015: 38).

Based on these actions set in the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, and keeping in mind the suggestions of NPE literature which argues that a normative actor itself should abide to its normative standards (Aggestam, 2008: 4; Manners, 2008b: 45; Whitman, 2001: 6) in order to be influential among others, it can be expected that the EU is foremost focusing on pursuing these goals throughout its routine and prompt processes related to migrants, such as the hotspot approach and other related processes. As part of its normative basis, the EU has committed itself to safeguarding human rights, both internally and in its external relations, including in its treatment of migrants. These commitments, as they can be found in the treaties as well as in subsequent Council directives and regulations, form the EU's human rights rhetoric.

3.2. 'Hotspots' – the first reception facilities in Greece and Italy

This section turns from EU's rhetoric and formal legal commitments to its concrete actions in the field. The 'hotspot' approach was developed by the European Commission during the summer of 2015 following the unprecedented influx of irregular migration to the EU and was aimed to tackle the challenges on the southern borders of the Union, especially in Italy and Greece. The more specific aim of the hotspot approach is to build a platform for the relevant

agencies to actively intervene and assist the frontline Member States during a crisis induced by heavy mixed migratory flows (European Commission, 2015a: 2). Mixed migration is a term that ultimately means a flow of cross-border movement consisting of refugees, asylum seekers, victims of trafficking or other migrants who wish to migrate to a country with better living conditions and opportunities (MHub). According to the hotspot approach introduced in 2015, the EU through its different agencies will provide operational support on registration, identification, fingerprinting and debriefing of asylum seekers and handling the returns of the irregular migrants (European Commission, 2015b) who are not applying for asylum and do not meet the criteria of a refugee. The explanatory note on the hotspot approach conducted by European Commission conclusively states that “In principle, an external border section should be considered to be a “Hotspot” for the limited period of time during which the emergency or crisis situation subsists and during which the support of the “Hotspot” approach is necessary.” (European Commission, 2015a: 3).

The first country where the hotspot approach was implemented in 2015 was Italy, shortly followed by Greece and the two have remained the only Member States in the EU to host the hotspots. The operational coordination on the ground in the hotspots is coordinated by an EU Regional Task Force (EURTF) who is responsible for the overall coordination and information exchange of all the teams and experts (European Commission, 2015a: 3). The other EU agencies working in the hotspots are the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), the EU Border Agency (Frontex), the EU Police Cooperation Agency (Europol) and the EU Judicial Cooperation Agency (Eurojust), all of which have a separate, but complementary to each other task to focus on in the hotspot approach (European Commission, 2015b). Frontex offers support to the Member States in the identification process and screening of the migrants, as well as collects information on the migration routes and facilitators of migration towards Europe (European Commission, 2015a: 1). EASO is supporting the Member States with expert knowledge throughout the asylum process and oversees the asylum application process carried out by the national authorities in the hotspots (European Commission, 2015a: 1-2). Europol is included in the hotspot approach to support the Member States by offering expertise and assistance when it comes to cross-border organized crime and terrorism while

Eurojust supports the coordination between national investigations and prosecuting authorities of several Member States in cases related to serious organized crime and terrorism (European Commission, 2015a: 2).

Despite the organizational and procedural assistance that the named EU agencies offer to the Member States, the hotspot approach does not include providing or maintaining the reception facilities as this is an obligation set for the hosting Member States (European Commission, 2015a: 5) . This means that while the EU is offering operational support to the struggling Member States through the hotspot approach, they have decided not to institutionally interfere when it comes to building and maintaining the physical reception sites in these hotspots, including the camps hosting the migrants during the time of processing their applications.

In 2015, 1.83 million irregular border crossings were registered by Frontex in the EU, 1.04 million – and five times as much as during the previous year – of which occurred in Greece and Italy (European Parliament, 2016: 1-2). By 2016, eleven hotspots introduced in the previous paragraphs had been created in the named Member States – six in Italy and five in Greece. However, in March 2016 when the European Parliament published the first briefing on the state of play of the hotspots and emergency relocation, only three of the eleven hotspots had become fully operational while the rest were still requiring maintenance on the facilities or awaiting a political decision by the national governments to be allowed to open (European Parliament, 2016: 1;7). Four of the hotspots in Italy are located in Sicily – in Pozzallo, Porto Empedocle, Augusta and Trapani, one in Lampedusa and one in the mainland in Taranto. As of March 2016, only the hotspots in Pozzallo and Porto Empedocle were fully operating (European Parliament, 2016: 7).

The five hotspots in Greece are all located on the Aegean Islands: Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros and Kos. During the writing of the European Parliament report on the state of play of the hotspots in March 2016, only Lesbos was a functional hotspot. The reception capacity of the Lesbos hotspot is the highest of all the eleven combined with its two centers Moria and Kara Tepe holding 2,079 places in 2016, followed by Chios with 2,250 places. The reception capacity of Samos, Leros and Kos hotspots is similar to the ones in Italy ranging between

290 and 650 places (European Parliament, 2015: 8). The locations of the hotspots in Italy and Greece are shown on image 1.

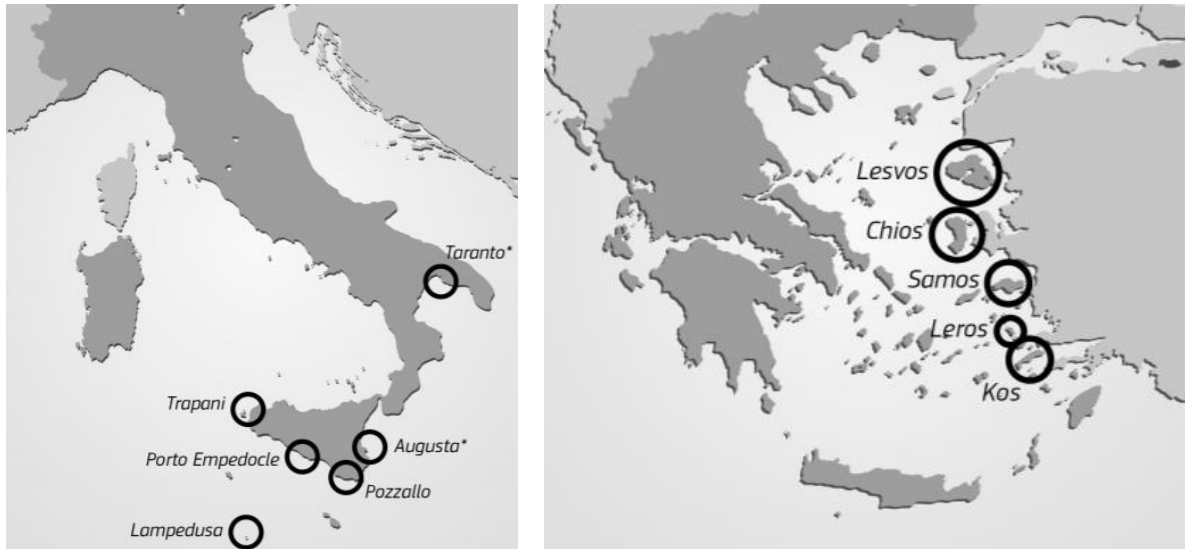


Image 1. Original locations of the hotspots. Sources: European Commission, 2015c; European Commission, 2015d.

Despite the fact that the implementation of the hotspot approach started only in late 2015, there had already been concerning reports on the conditions in the hotspots back then. The European Parliament briefing report on the state of play in the hotspots in 2016 states that some NGOs such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) severely criticized the First Aid and Reception Centre in the hotspot in Pozzallo, Italy drawing attention to overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, poor separation between women, children and men, insufficient legal and medical services and a general lack of contact with the rest of the world (European Parliament, 2016: 8). Overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions in the reception areas and facilities were also reported and criticized by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) while Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) reported that the hotspot approach has caused confusion and led to thousands of people queuing outside on the island of Lesvos without access to essential sanitation needs such as water and toilets. Such reports and concerns culminated with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to note in January 2016 that the first line reception capacity in the Greek hotspots is undeveloped and below the EU standards (European Parliament, 2016: 9). As a reaction to

the described reports by NGOs and other agencies working with refugees, the co-rapporteurs from the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs have stated that since the essential purpose of the hotspots is providing protection and humanitarian aid to the ones in need, the categorization of the migrants in the hotspots should not threaten respect for fundamental rights for those who have not been granted international protection yet or to whom it has been rejected (European Parliament, 2016: 11).

Following the European Parliament report in March 2016 on the state of play in the hotspots, the Parliament has conducted two similar follow-up reports on the situation in the hotspots in June 2018 and September 2020. The situation report from 2018 reveals that at that time all of the five hotspots on the Greek islands were fully operational while the ones in Lesbos, Chios and Samos islands were severely overcrowded. According to the report around 700 extra places had been created in these camps in order to tackle the overcrowding, bringing the overall capacity to 6,338 places. However, in June 2018 the total number of refugees in these hotspots was more than 16, 500 (European Parliament, 2018: 3). A reflection on the total capacity and the actual occupancy of the Greek hotspots as of May 2018 can be seen in Table 2. The overcrowded hotspots are indicated on a red background.

Hotspot in Greece	Total reception capacity	Actual occupancy (May 2018)
Lesvos	3,000	8,500
Chios	1,014	1,533
Samos	648	3,276
Leros	980	924
Kos	816	968
Total	6,458	15, 201

Table 2. Total capacity and actual occupancy of Greek hotspots in May 2018. Source: European Parliament, 2018: 3. Author's compilation.

In 2018, five hotspots had been established in Italy in Lampedusa, Messina, Pozzallo, Taranto and Trapani although the hotspot in Taranto was temporarily closed for maintenance in March 2018 and the hotspot in Lampedusa was only working with limited activities since

then (European Parliament, 2018: 3-4). The hotspots in Porto Empedocle and Augusta mentioned in the previous report in 2016 had been closed by 2018. The total capacity of the Italian hotspots including the ones closed for maintenance and working with limited services was 1850, but similarly to the Greek hotspots, the ones in Pozzallo, Trapani and Lampedusa exceeded the capacity of the reception facilities (European Parliament, 2018: 4). The exact number of migrants staying in the Italian hotspots in June 2018 has not been mentioned in the Parliament's report.

Similarly to the previous state of the play report on the hotspots in 2016, the report from 2018 outlines a handful of problems that NGOs and EU agencies have observed in the hotspots. These problems include overcrowding, but also slow processing of the asylum applications, insufficient and slow detection of the vulnerable migrants, differential treatment of migrants of different nationalities, inappropriate living conditions including unsuitable conditions for children and a generally extended detention of refugees and migrants in the hotspots (European Parliament, 2018: 5). A final section of the report labelled 'European Parliament's position' reads that "The European Parliament has underlined the need to ensure that the hotspot approach does not undermine the fundamental rights of asylum-seekers and refugees crossing the European borders. Parliament has aimed to identify and improve the detention and reception conditions for third country nationals in Europe." (European Parliament, 2018: 6). However, the report does not point out how the Parliament or other EU institutions and agencies are planning to improve named conditions or what has been done to avoid previously listed problems such as severe overcrowding and unsuitable living conditions.

The last state of play report up to date that the European Parliament has published on the issue is from September 2020. Based on this report, the situation in the hotspots, especially in the ones on the Greek islands has worsened even more. All of the five hotspots on the Greek islands were still fully operational in the fall of 2020 while the occupancy rate in these hotspots exceeded the total capacity nearly four times (European Parliament, 2020: 5), demonstrating an even more serious overcrowding than stated in the previous reports. Based on the data from the Greek hotspots, the actual occupancy was 23, 269 in September 2020. However, according to UNHCR the real amount of refugees and asylum seekers living in the

hotspots and surrounding areas in the Aegean islands was around 27,200 (European Parliament, 2020: 5). A reflection of the total capacity and the actual occupancy of the Greek hotspots as of September 2020 can be seen in Table 3. The overcrowded hotspots are indicated on a red background.

Hotspot in Greece	Total reception capacity	Actual occupancy (September 2020)
Lesvos	2,757	12,767
Chios	1,014	3,496
Samos	648	4,643
Leros	860	1,023
Kos	816	1,340
Total	6,095	23,269 *~27,200 according to UNHCR

Table 3. Total capacity and actual occupancy of Greek hotspots in September 2020. Source: European Parliament, 2020: 5. Author's compilation.

The report also indicates that the overcrowding in the Greek hotspots has led to rising pressure on security issues, medical services, waste management and the infrastructures in general thus making the situation critical. According to the report, the combination of poor conditions and the inefficient asylum application procedure has led to tensions in the hotspots, culminating in a big fire in the Moria center on the Lesvos island on 8 September 2020, leaving nearly its whole population (more than 12,000 people) without a shelter (European Parliament, 2020: 5).

In fall 2020 only four of the hotspots in Italy still remained active – in Lampedusa, Messina, Pozzallo and Taranto although the activities in Lampedusa were still limited due to refurbishing works. The total occupancy of the first three Italian hotspots in September 2020 was 405 persons and the Taranto hotspot did not host anyone at the moment. However, the report states that the island of Sicily where the hotspots of Messina and Pozzallo are located was at that moment nevertheless hosting more than 7,000 migrants and the region of Puglia

on the mainland nearly 4,000 migrants who were still waiting on a decision to their application (European Parliament, 2020: 6). Despite the somewhat more positive numbers presented hereby based on the situation report, the overall conditions, and problems that the migrants face in Italy are the same as the migrants in Greece face ranging from poor living conditions, overcrowding, slow asylum process and lack of information and medical assistance.

The European Parliament state of play report on the hotspots from September 2020 claims that between 2015 and July 2020, the EU has provided Greece with €2,64 billion to help improve their migration and border management. Some of this financial support has been used for relocating refugees from the overcrowded camps, increasing the reception capacity, and assisting voluntary returns (European Parliament, 2020: 6). Meanwhile, the EU has supported Italy with €1,031 billion to assist with asylum, migration, security, and border management (European Parliament, 2020: 7). Yet, the EU has not made clear obligations or recommendations on how the recipient Member States should use this support nor encouraged them to use it directly for bettering the conditions in the hotspot reception centers.

The report of September 2020 similarly to the previous two reports mentions the main concerns in the hotspot camps such as slow asylum application processing, related overcrowding at the reception facilities and resulting unsanitary and inappropriate living conditions. The report also states that “After an onsite visit in October 2019, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, called for urgent measures to address the deteriorating situation in the hotspots, making reference to unhygienic conditions and deficiencies in the provision of medical care. After the Moria fire, Mijatović called for “a fundamental rethinking of the approach that led to the overcrowded, inhumane and completely unsustainable situation in Moria and elsewhere on the Aegean islands” (European Parliament, 2020: 8). On 16 April 2020, the Greek authorities in cooperation with the European Commission and some international organizations agreed to relocate 2,380 people from the overcrowded hotspot camps on the Aegean island to mainland Greece (European Parliament, 2020: 9). Nevertheless, even with this amount of persons relocated from the camps, they still remain severely overpopulated.

3.3. European Union human rights practice in the hotspots

This section provides insights to the actual human rights practice of the EU (including the responsible Member States) in the hotspot reception facilities in Italy and Greece. The analysis is conducted based on two reports from 2016 and 2019 consisting the opinions of FRA on fundamental rights in the hotspots. FRA was established in 2007 with the aim of providing EU and its Member States' institutions, bodies and agencies with assistance and expertise related to fundamental rights when implementing the Union law and to support them in taking necessary measures to fully comply with fundamental rights (*Council regulation establishing a European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights*, Regulation 168/2007, Article 2). The opinions on fundamental rights in the hotspots can broadly be grouped into five categories: access to international protection, rights of children, identification of vulnerable people, safety for everyone in the hotspots, and readmissions. Since the last category – readmissions – does not solely focus on the conditions within the hotspot facilities, the following analysis will only touch upon fundamental rights concerns in the first four categories.

In general, the report from 2016 by FRA on the fundamental rights conditions in the hotspots states that despite the efforts made by the national and EU bodies, serious fundamental rights gaps persist in the facilities and throughout the processes. The report reveals that while some of these gaps can be identified only in specific hotspots, many of them are linked to the hotspot approach as such and thus affect all the hotspots in Italy and Greece. FRA suggests that majority of the fundamental rights gaps, especially in the hotspots in Greece are caused by the prolonged stay of migrants in the hotspots and claims that a wide variety of these gaps, especially the ones directly caused by overcrowding, could be avoided by a faster onward movement from the hotspots to the next facilities. The report states that unless the systemic issues identified by the FRA in the hotspots are addressed, the hotspot approach is deemed to fail in respecting the rights put forward in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFREU) and other relevant laws and regulations (FRA, 2016: 4). The update report conducted by FRA on fundamental rights in the hotspots in 2019 claimed that despite efforts to improve the situation, only three of the 21 opinions put forward in the 2016

report had been addressed in a way that had resulted in a significant improvement, two of which related to readmissions and only one to the human rights conditions within the facilities (FRA, 2019: 6).

Access to international protection

The main problems outlined by the FRA in 2016 related to access to international protection include delays in processing the applications of migrants and the lack of information for the migrants on how to proceed with their applications once they have made it to the hotspots in Greece and Italy.

First, the FRA has found that processing the asylum applications in the hotspots is not speedy and clear enough, leaving the migrants applying for international protection in uncertainty and legal limbo (FRA, 2016: 4). Furthermore, it has been discovered that especially in the hotspots in Greece, migrants from certain nationalities have to wait for their asylum applications to be processed for several months whereas for migrants from some other countries this time is much shorter. This goes against Article 18 of the CFREU by which “The right to asylum shall be guaranteed with due respect for the rules of the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 and the Protocol of 31 January 1967 relating to the status of refugees and in accordance with the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union” (CFREU, Article 18), meaning that while there might be a certain degree to what asylum applications are prioritized by nationality, this should not lead to discrimination based on nationality (FRA, 2016: 5), such as longer detainment of migrants who are from a ‘less prioritized’ origin country. In addition to the reference to Article 18 of CFREU and the within implied reference to the Geneva Convention (UN General Assembly, 1951), the FRA opinion includes a reference to the Asylum Procedures Directive (2013/32/EU) which requires Member States to make sure that migrants can lodge an asylum application as soon as possible once they have shown their interest for it (FRA, 2016: 5). Considering the data which has proven that migrants from certain countries need to wait for this process for several months, it seems that obligations put forward in the Directive are not being fulfilled in the hotspots. The FRA follow-up report from 2019 states that while “Registration of the asylum claims is faster on the Greek islands, [...] delays in conducting

first interviews are still significant” (FRA, 2019: 9), indicating that it is one of the fundamental rights gaps pointed out in 2016 which had not shown substantial improvements by 2019.

Second, FRA reported that the significant delays in the asylum application process result in unaccompanied children and children with families who have already settled in one of the Member States to wait in conditions ill-suited for children (FRA, 2016: 5). This violates Article 24 of CFREU by which children have a right to protection and care necessary for their well-being; the public authorities and private institutions always have to make the child’s best interest a primary consideration in all actions related to the child; and every child has the right to regularly keep a direct contact with his or her parents (CFREU, Article 24). By keeping the children in the hotspot facilities with poor living conditions, insufficient medical care and no access to education, the authorities are thus not acting in the best interest of the child. The follow-up report from 2019 states that there have been no significant improvements in making the registration of asylum claim faster for unaccompanied children in Italy and Greece (FRA, 2019: 9).

Third, FRA has addressed the issue of providing relevant information on how to proceed with the asylum applications which is a prerequisite for having access to the right to asylum as specified in the afore-mentioned Article 18 of CFREU and the Geneva Convention (UN General Assembly, 1951). While FRA has stated that remarkable efforts had been made in the hotspots by providing both oral and written informative materials on the asylum process, the capacity still was not enough to sufficiently cover all the arrivals in 2016 (FRA, 2016: 5). By 2019, FRA found that the situation had improved although still not resulted in significant advancements in the hotspots where the migrants still remained partly uninformed about the asylum processes (FRA, 2019: 9).

Fourth, the FRA drew attention to problems related to the fingerprinting of irregular migrants. The asylum seekers and migrants who enter Europe through illegal means have an obligation to provide fingerprints for Eurodac for their registration in the system. The FRA found that while many of the migrants do not know the necessity of this process and are not given sufficient information on it, there have been instances of using physical force and even

detention in order to collect the fingerprints (FRA, 2016: 5). Depending on the exact treatment, this has in certain cases gone against the provisions of Article 1 – the right to dignity; Article 3 – integrity of a person; Article 4 – prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and Article 6 – the right to liberty and security – of the Charter (CFREU). The 2019 report reveals that by then, use of excessive force had finished and there had been no more reports on violence or detainment due to fingerprinting by the asylum-seekers and migrants (FRA, 2019: 10) making it one of the three fundamental rights gaps that had been significantly improved by the EU and the Member States between 2016 and 2019.

Fifth, FRA points out the necessity of legal support as a prerequisite for full access to the right of asylum specifically stating that free legal assistance and representation has to be available throughout the appeal proceeding of the asylum seekers. Furthermore, FRA has noted that sufficient legal support in the first stage of asylum procedure could significantly speed up the whole asylum process and reduce the number of appeals (FRA, 2016: 6). The legal basis of this opinion stems from Article 47 of the Charter – the right to an effective remedy and to fair trial (CFREU, Article 47), also embedded in Article 20 of the Asylum Procedures Directive. The 2019 update report shows that this issue had not shown any improvements within the three years in the Greek islands. Meanwhile, the asylum procedures in Italy are not carried out in the hotspots (FRA, 2019: 10) giving a possible explanation to why migrants and asylum seekers spend a significantly longer time in the hotspot reception facilities in Greece than in Italy.

Rights of the child

The fundamental rights gaps related to the rights of the child vary, but the main issue is children's general well-being that is not being adequately secured. FRA has stated that systems in place are not able to guarantee the best interests of the child, referring to the absence of specialized accommodation capacity for children, especially unaccompanied children in the hotspots. Additional challenges persist through the lack of access to education and poor expertise and screening of the people working in the field of child protection on the hotspots (FRA, 2016: 6).

FRA found that in both Greece and Italy, many unaccompanied children who arrive to the hotspots receive a temporary guardianship from local public officials who do not have specialized child protection expertise. The FRA has found that this is a precondition to guaranteeing the child's best interest and overall well-being as required by aforementioned Article 24 – the rights of the child – of the Charter and additionally by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (FRA, 2016: 6). The update report shows that this issue has been addressed by EU and the local authorities in Greece and Italy. However, no significant improvements on ground had been recorded as of 2019 (FRA, 2019: 10).

Second, the FRA pointed out that children are in an especially high risk of neglect or abuse when they are not accompanied by close family members or legal guardians, thus they should be identified and registered as soon as possible and provided necessary protection in order to comply with Article 24 of CFREU (FRA, 2016: 6). As of 2016, this was not the case in Greek and Italian hotspots where cases related to separated children were not given a priority in identification and registration. As of 2019, the first assessment of the situation of separated children was usually taking place already upon arrival proving that the situation had improved. However, effective monitoring of the situation of these children after the first assessment still remained limited (FRA, 2019: 10).

The third opinion is drawing on the aforementioned Articles 7 and 24 of CFREU and is additionally supported by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) case law which has made it clear that children should not be detained in inappropriate facilities (if at all) like the hotspots, especially once they have been registered (FRA, 2016: 7). The report claims that as of 2016, the chronic lack of suitable accommodation capacity and the related slow processing of children's asylum application led to infringement of children's rights (FRA, 2016: 7). By 2019 the situation in the hotspots was somewhat better since separated and unaccompanied children were generally moved on from the hotspots in Italy after their first registration while in Greece they had to stay in the hotspot facilities but were not detained there and were granted a certain level of freedom of movement. Yet, the update report still noted that the conditions in these facilities were way below the ones needed for children (FRA, 2019: 10-11).

Fourth, the FRA pointed out that EU law has specific requirements regarding the material conditions, healthcare, education, and child-specific activities which are aimed to guarantee children's well-being and meet with every child's special needs. However, these requirements had not in reality been fulfilled in the hotspots as of 2016 (FRA, 2016: 7). The update report from 2019 claimed that over the three years the conditions for children's physical and mental well-being and education in the hotspots in Greece and Italy had got even worse, not showing any signs of improvement towards these requirements (FRA, 2019: 11).

Identification of vulnerabilities

Numerous migrants and asylum seekers that arrive in the hotspots belong to different vulnerable groups such as children, people who have suffered through trauma related to armed conflict, losing family members back at home or on the way to Europe, history sexual abuse or human trafficking etc. These persons need to be quickly identified and taken care of keeping in mind their specific vulnerabilities. However, it is difficult to detect these vulnerabilities unless they are visible to the eye or if the vulnerable persons themselves share their experience. The hotspots are lacking standard operating procedures for identifying these vulnerabilities (FRA, 2016: 8).

The first opinion put forward by the FRA regarding vulnerable persons refers to the Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU) stating that it is a shared responsibility of all the actors including the EU agencies and Member States, authorities operating in the hotspots to identify and refer vulnerable people. Thus, it should be an integral part of the first reception and identification procedures and continue to be a constant priority. The FRA has claimed that these vulnerability identification procedures should actively involve experts such as medical, social, and psychological staff to work with the authorities throughout the identification process and that these experts should also be granted regular access to the hotspot facilities to conduct check-ups (FRA, 2016: 8). The 2019 report shows that there had been certain advancements in the field since the vulnerability identification processes had improved in both Greece and Italy. However, serious shortages of expert staff in the hotspots persisted (FRA, 2019: 11).

Second, the FRA noted the need to employ female staff members to contribute to safeguarding the dignity of women who have to undergo various procedures in the hotspots. Article 7 of the Charter ensures respect for everyone's private life (CFREU, Article 7) and Article 15 of the Asylum Procedures Directive (2013/32/EU) ensures same sex staff to be available in the facilities in case an applicant should request it. The FRA argues that this plays an essential role in enabling the reporting of sexual and gender-based violence and also when carrying out procedures requiring physical contact. This is why the availability of female staff and interpreters has to be constantly guaranteed throughout the operation of the hotspots and taken into account while hiring the staff (FRA, 2016: 8). The update report of 2019 revealed that while the proportion of female interpreters and staff of other authorities engaged in the identification processes had improved, the proportion of female police officers still remained significantly lower than that of male officers (FRA, 2019: 12).

Safety of all persons in the hotspots

Opinions on the safety of all persons in the hotspots are mainly addressing the fundamental rights gaps recorded in the hotspots in Greece where several problems tightly related to general overcrowding and poor living conditions have led to security issues in the facilities. FRA has also separately pointed out limited community outreach activities for the persons staying in the hotspots, general lack of information and extended stays. The combination of the mentioned factors has led to almost weekly demonstrations, riots, and outbursts of violence by frustrated and distrusting migrants and asylum seekers posing a threat to themselves and the staff working in the hotspots (FRA, 2016: 9).

First, Article 41 of the Charter states the right to good administration (CFREU, Article 41) and thereby implies the right of the people staying in the hotspots to be informed of the procedures that are relevant for them. As it turns out from the 2016 FRA report, the provision of information on such procedures and rights is inconsistent among the migrants and asylum-seekers in the hotspots and is often leading to tensions between them as they perceive a competition between each other (FRA, 2016: 9). The follow-up report from 2019 showed that there had been no improvements in information distribution and significant information gaps existed both in the hotspots in Greece and Italy. Furthermore, the issue had been outlined

as one of the main concerns by UNHCR's inter-agency participatory assessment in the hotspots on the Greek islands (FRA, 2019: 12).

Second, FRA found that women and girls face specific risks while staying in the hotspot camps because their execution and design does not allow to take into account certain issues that might pose a threat, for example assigning them to live together with strange men. FRA suggests that such risks should be thoroughly considered while planning and modifying the physical infrastructure of these facilities in order to comply with Article 18(4) of the Reception Conditions Directive (2013/32/EU) which urges the Member States to take necessary measures for preventing assault and gender-based violence, including sexual assault and harassment (FRA, 2016: 9). By 2019, the situation had not improved in the hotspots on the Greek islands where overcrowding had significantly increased the risk of sexual violence – most single women were not accommodated in separate areas and in the camps in Chios and Samos there was a lack of gender-separated sanitary facilities heightening the risk of gender-based violence even more (FRA, 2019: 12).

The third opinion regarding the safety of people in the hotspots once again addressed the issue of children's safety as they are facing a higher risk of violence and abuse as well as are more likely to be seriously affected by such experiences. FRA states that the hotspots should include physical security measures in the form of separate accommodation to families with children and unaccompanied children as well as safe areas for children which are guarded by specialized security staff (FRA, 2016: 9-10). This is necessary to comply with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) by which states have a responsibility to guarantee the children's safety from violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and trafficking (UNCRC). The 2019 FRA report on the situation showed that the conditions in this regard had improved in Italy due to shorter stays in the hotspots. However, the situation in the Greek hotspots had not got significantly better and children continued to be exposed to abuse and violence both as victims and witnesses (FRA, 2019: 13).

3.4.Discussion

When comparing the EU's formal commitments with the actual practice, a gap between the former and the latter becomes visible. The EU's treatment of migrants in the hotspots falls short of its human rights rhetoric. Therefore, there is inconsistency between EU human rights rhetoric and practice when it comes to the treatment of migrants in the hotspots. The human rights gaps persist both within the procedural work of the hotspots and in the physical conditions of the hotspot facilities, especially the camps hosting the asylum seekers who are waiting for a decision on their asylum application. The situation reports by FRA conducted in 2016 and 2019 show that there had been minimal improvements in the hotspots throughout these three years despite the fact that FRA had given their opinions on specific issues that hinder compliance with human rights and also had given advice on how to avoid these issues in the future.

Majority of the human rights gaps outlined in the reports such as poor living conditions, tensions between the persons staying in the hotspots and unsafe conditions particularly for children and women are related to the severe overcrowding in the hotspot facilities. The overcrowding in return is a problem largely caused by the slow and unclear asylum application processes. While building and maintaining the facilities in the hotspots is primarily a responsibility of the Member States (Greece and Italy), the operational side of the hotspots is coordinated by EU agencies and thus a responsibility of the EU as a unitary body. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that Member States separately also represent the EU as a whole, especially throughout their actions related to issues of great significance to the Union such as immediate response to the migrant crisis. Thus, it can be concluded that the EU has not been living up to its own human rights standards and values when it comes to the hotspot approach.

Reflecting on the theoretical background on normative power that has been introduced in the first chapter of the thesis, this means that while the EU is being normative in its stated values and intentions, it is not always acting in a normative way, such as in handling the hotspot approach and the hotspot reception facilities. That in return, based on the works of Manners and Whitman, could mean that since the normative essence of the EU – constituted through

its legal basis – does not entirely reflect through the real actions and practice of the EU, it might also make no impact or at least no desired impact on the rest of the world.

4. External Perceptions of the EU in Turkey and Jordan

This chapter of the thesis entails the analysis and discussion of the data on the external perceptions of the EU in Turkey and Jordan, focusing on the perceptions related to the EU human rights practice and treatment of refugees and migrants in general.

4.1. Elite perceptions of the EU as a human rights model in the context of the treatment of migrants

This subchapter focuses on the external perceptions of the EU in Turkey and Jordan deriving from the statements of the political elite, more specifically – of the president of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the king of Jordan, Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein between 2015-2020.

4.1.1. Turkey

The statements of President Erdoğan regarding the perceptions of the EU, especially in relation to the approach to migration and human rights of the refugees and other migrants touch upon several issues. Erdoğan has criticized the EU for keeping its borders closed to the refugees and silently standing by while they are struggling to reach Europe. In an interview given in the end of January 2015, the President of Turkey said “The number of Syrian refugees in Europe is 130 thousand. We host 1.7 million, they host 130 thousand. Lebanon also accommodates 1.7 million Syrians. There are approximately 1 million Syrian refugees in Jordan.[...] The European Union remains silent.” (Erdoğan, 2015a). By stating out these numbers, Erdoğan tried to emphasize the imbalance of burden that was taken by the international community. In another speech held by Erdoğan around the same time, he addressed a question to the international community: “I would like to ask each and every one of your consciences the following question and address the whole world: [...] Will solely feeling remorse [...] for those millions of refugees exculpate us?” (Erdoğan, 2015b), pointing out that more actions are needed from the EU to help the refugees fleeing from the Middle East, especially from Syria. With even sharper nodes of criticism, Erdoğan said in April of the same year: “Those, who flee their countries on boats through the Mediterranean and Aegean, are drowning. They [the EU] say ‘let them drown, let them die’. Are not they human?”

What about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?” (Erdoğan, 2015c), indicating that the EU is going against human rights by not doing enough for the refugees. A couple of weeks later the President of Turkey also argued that “The European Union approach the migration problem in the Mediterranean Sea from a security-oriented perspective instead of a humane one.” (Erdoğan, 2015d). Erdoğan repeated this stance at a joint press conference with European Council President Donald Tusk in September 2015, when he said that “It is unethical of Europe to approach these people, who are struggling for their lives, by thinking of its own comfort first. This attitude means Europe is turning its back to all fundamental values, it is based upon.” (Erdoğan, 2015e).

While strongly criticizing the approach that the EU has taken on the migration crisis, Erdoğan has also clearly opposed this approach to the open-door policy that Turkey has taken, claiming it to be more humane than that of the EU’s. For example in September 2015, President Erdoğan underlined that Turkey has taken a humane, principled and determined stance to the refugee crisis while opening the doors to the refugees instead of watching them drown in the Aegean and Mediterranean (Erdoğan, 2015f). In October 2015, Erdoğan argued that “[...] we should also admit that the quality of hospitality we show to millions of people in our country has no match elsewhere on Earth. The situation of people in the refugee camps or those living in the cities with their own means or with support from others is very good compared to other countries.” (Erdoğan, 2015g).

Erdoğan’s statements regarding the EU started on a somewhat more positive note in 2016 with him saying on the 9th of May, the Europe Day, that:

“on behalf of the international community, Turkey has undertaken responsibility in the face of these challenges [migration crisis stemming from Syria] and fulfilled its humanitarian duties since the very beginning. We are pleased to see that the same far-sighted approach has been growing stronger in Europe and efforts have begun to be exerted to alleviate the effects of humanitarian tragedy.” (Erdoğan, 2016a).

Despite some positive impressions on the EU approach to the migration crisis on Europe Day, only a week later President Erdoğan argued that “tragedies that refugees in European

countries go through emanate from differences of viewpoint on the issue, because if it is a matter of means, European countries have means many times more than ours” (Erdoğan, 2016b). By stating that, the President of Turkey was once again trying to show that the EU in his eyes should have done more for the refugees than it had at this point.

In his further statements in 2016 President Erdoğan has strongly criticized the EU, suggesting that it has not been living up to its claimed values when it comes to caring for the refugees, indicating that the EU has been acting hypocritical. In June 2016, he said:

“When 60 000 people gathered in Edirne [border province in Turkey], they [the EU] got very anxious, and started wondering about whether all those people would cross into Bulgaria or Greece. But in the meantime we are hosting three million refugees. Why? Because we care about people, unlike you. you have no such concerns [...] this is your ugly face.” (Erdoğan, 2016c).

A few days later President Erdoğan further argued that “the EU bloc’s bad humanitarian and immoral approach to immigrants has led to a serious debate about the trustworthiness of the European Union” (Erdoğan, 2016d).

The President of Turkey has also used the criticism of the EU as hypocritical actor in terms of its response to the migration crisis to compare Turkey’s response and outline its strengths, such as being more caring and value-based. In June 2016, he said that “the enormous European Union couldn’t manage even a crisis sparked by refugees that can be deemed in small quantity compared to the number of refugees we currently host” (Erdoğan, 2016e). While delivering an address at the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly, President Erdoğan slammed the treatment that refugees have been given within the EU by saying that “refugees running away from death and tyranny face degrading treatment in European cities” (Erdoğan, 2016f). A major emphasis in his criticism towards the EU, however, is still put on the closed-doors policy. In October 2016 Erdoğan said that “European countries in particular have failed this test of humanity. European countries that have closed off their borders to refugees and instead of welcoming them have trampled on the very values that they have defended to this day.” (Erdoğan, 2016g). In comparison, he argued during a joint press

conference with the President of Slovenia a few weeks later that “today, Turkey is a country that observes EU’s fundamental founding values much more than most of the EU countries do” (Erdoğan, 2016h). In December of the same year, after once again claiming that the EU does not care about the oppressed and the victims, President Erdoğan further posed a question addressed to the EU asking “where are the human rights?” (Erdoğan, 2016i).

In 2017, President Erdoğan’s statements on the address of the EU’s handling of the refugee crisis became increasingly critical with main emphasis on the hypocrisy regarding the values, especially human rights and Islamophobia. Throughout the criticism, opposing Turkey’s approach to that of the EU has remained in focus. For example when talking about the topic of human rights in general, Mr. Erdoğan said in April 2017 that “we are embracing and upholding democracy, human rights and freedoms not because the European countries want so, but because our citizens deserve them. And we are doing this better than they do” (Erdoğan, 2017b), indicating that the EU is not keeping up to its own human rights standards as good as Turkey, where the EU has been expecting to see more attention on human rights protection. Earlier that year he had argued that Turkey cannot accept the EU’s double-standard policies and inconsistencies against them (Erdoğan, 2017a), referring to the human rights expectations and practice.

At the 72nd UN General Assembly Erdoğan said that “we meet all of the refugee community’s needs – including housing, food, clothing, healthcare and education – and provide high living standards that earn the appreciation of everyone who visits our country” (Erdoğan, 2017c). While pointing out the responsibility that Turkey has taken before the refugees, Erdoğan claimed that “by not fulfilling its responsibilities toward refugees, and by failing to keep its many promises, the European Union has destroyed its credibility” (Erdoğan, 2017d). In November 2017, the President of Turkey further argued that the EU has been turning its back to the refugees to save its economic wealth (Erdoğan, 2017e). At an event organized on International Migrants Day, Erdoğan criticized several instances related to refugees that had happened in the EU, such as closing of the borders, separating children from their parents and confiscating their belongings. He also slammed the attitude of some European politicians who had suggested to let the migrants drown in the Mediterranean and Aegean (Erdoğan,

2017f). Lastly, he referred to an incident that happened on the border of Hungary in 2015 when a reporter tripped a refugee carrying a child⁸: “It is high time the Europe which lost its human feelings to such an extent that it can trip a father running towards hope holding his child in his arms questioned itself.” (Erdoğan, 2017f). By pointing out these examples, Mr. Erdoğan was again trying to highlight the contrast between Turkey’s and EU’s approach to the refugee crisis.

In the speeches and statements of 2018, President Erdoğan was strongly criticizing the EU for not fulfilling the EU-Turkey Statement of 18 March 2016⁹ by which the EU was supposed to support Turkey in hosting the Syrian refugees with 6 billion euros paid in two parts over the next two years (Erdoğan, 2018a). A few weeks later, Erdoğan was addressing the claims of the EU that they would only give money for projects, NGOs or UN organizations working with refugees, by saying: “European Commission has proposed the second tranche of €3 billion. [...] But first they should transfer the first tranche and make us use it properly. I believe we would gain a substantial momentum in a short time if the EU did not waste it’s time for pointless things.” (Erdoğan, 2018b). At a press conference before attending an EU-Turkey Leader’s Meeting later that month, President Erdoğan claimed that “Turkey has fulfilled all the requirements of the agreement, and as a result, the humanitarian crisis caused by the illegal migration in the Aegean Sea has come to an end” (Erdoğan, 2018c), indicating that unlike the EU, Turkey has lived up to its own obligations set in the Joint Statement.

In 2018, President Erdoğan also directly criticized the treatment of refugees in the EU and more specifically, the reception conditions of the EU refugee camps. On World Refugee Day in June, the President of Turkey said in his message that “while many Western countries who claim to be cradle of democracy and human rights have been hiding behind barbwire, Turkey has become a safe harbor for 4 million asylum seekers, more than 3,5 million of which are Syrian” (Erdoğan, 2018d). In December the same year, he said that “nothing can be achieved

⁸ The Guardian. “Hungarian nationalist TV camera operator filmed kicking refugee children.” 8. September 2015. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/08/hungarian-nationalist-tv-camera-operator-filmed-kicking-refugee-children> (Last accessed 12.05.2021).

⁹ European Council. EU-Turkey statement, 18 March 2016. Available at <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/> (Last accessed 12.05.2021).

by imprisoning refugees in concentration camps” (Erdoğan, 2018e), suggesting that the conditions in the closed EU refugee camps are comparable to concentration camps. He further argued that “no one can find a solution to the refugee issue by merely closing their borders or confining people, who flee from starvation, draught and conflicts, to barbed wires with police measures” (Erdoğan, 2018e), criticizing both the EU closed-doors approach and the conditions it has created for refugees who have been allowed entry into the Union.

In 2019 President Erdoğan continued to argue that the EU Member States among other western countries have failed a test of humanity by refusing the refugees on their borders. At a G20 Summit in June he highlighted the burden that Turkey and Jordan among only a few neighboring countries of Syria have had to carry by themselves while the West has not been helping enough: “Developed countries and western states, which lecture other countries on human rights, have unfortunately failed in the most fundamental test of humanity” (Erdoğan, 2019). He further illustrated his point by saying that “little kids will continue to lose their lives on riverbanks and seashores unless policies centered on conscience rather than prejudices are implemented for refugees” (Erdoğan, 2019). By saying this, Erdoğan referred to the situation in EU southern Member States which upon the arrival of refugees had blocked their entrance to the country or failed to save them at sea.

In 2020, President Erdoğan strongly criticized the treatment of refugees in Greece. In March 2020, he stated that “all countries, including Greece, must comply with their international obligations, examine the applications of migrants and refugees that have arrived in their borders, regardless of their nationalities, and provide the necessary protection” (Erdoğan, 2020a). He added that on the same day, Greek police had allegedly killed two refugees on the border between Turkey and Greece and suggested that since the President of the European Council Charles Michel was supposed to visit the border the following day, he should be able to witness the inhumane treatment given to the migrants there (Erdoğan, 2020a). In September, the President of Turkey claimed that the attitude of the EU towards refugees originates from the colonial times, referring to the economic exploitation over humane treatment and added that “it is this crooked mentality which turned the Mediterranean, the cradle of civilizations, into a giant grave for refugees” (Erdoğan, 2020b).

To conclude, the discourse of President Erdoğan on the address of the EU in relation to its response to the refugee crisis throughout 2015 until 2020 was strongly critical. He accused the EU of Islamophobia and selfishness for deciding to close its borders to the migrants instead of helping them. Additionally, he claimed that the EU has proved to be hypocritical when it comes to human rights protection and that it has turned its back to some of the main values stated in the treaties. Furthermore, Erdoğan was strongly contrasting the approach of the EU to the approach of Turkey, saying that the latter has been welcoming and provided the refugees with needed assistance while the EU in addition to closing its borders has been mistreating the refugees, refused to help them out at the sea and created camps with poor conditions.

4.1.2. Jordan

The representation of the EU in the speeches and statements of King Abdullah II of Jordan has been very different from those of Erdoğan, mainly just pointing out the burden that Jordan is bearing through hosting a large number of refugees and requesting further assistance from the EU to manage the crisis. In his speech before the European Parliament in March 2015, King Abdullah II said that:

“Despite scarce resources, the people of Jordan have opened their arms to refugees fleeing regional violence. [...] [Jordan is] giving shelter to 1.4 million Syrian refugees, which is 20 percent of the population. [...] This is more than the equivalent of France hosting the entire population of Belgium. My country is now the third-largest refugee host and I thank all of you who are helping is to uphold this global responsibility.”
(King Abdullah II, 2015a).

This statement by the King of Jordan shows that while it is important for Jordan to emphasize the effort that it is putting into hosting the refugees and treating them humanely, it does not oppose itself to the EU.

Furthermore, Jordan has shown gratitude for the support that it has received from the EU. For example, in November 2015, King Abdullah II thanked the Chancellor of Austria for supporting Jordan and its people in managing the large number of refugees (King Abdullah

II, 2015b). In December of the, the King of Jordan pointed out that “the increasing pressure on its limited resources requires intensifying the international community’s support to the Kingdom to enable it to continue providing relief and humanitarian services in this area [of hosting refugees].” (King Abdullah II, 2015c). Such statements by the leader of Jordan show that while the burden of refugees is challenging for Jordan, it has chosen to not criticize the EU openly for lacking solidarity and not living up to its values.

In 2016 King Abdullah II kept the line with his statements on the refugee crisis and the relations between Jordan and the EU in terms of handling the situation. In an interview given to CNN in January 2016, he opened up a bit more about the approach that Jordan has taken on the refugee influx, stating that Jordan was hosting about 1.2-1.3 million refugees at that moment (King Abdullah II, 2016a). The King of Jordan also claimed that there has been some pressure by the international community to accept more refugees still waiting on the other side of the border:

“[...] we have been challenged recently because there is 12, 000 or 14, 000 refugees across our border on the eastern side that have not been allowed to come in except for very strict screening. [...] We do have our government, our military and our hospitals as well as NGOs on the other side looking after them, but the pressure we get from the international community saying ‘look, you have already got 1.2’.” (King Abdullah II, 2016a).

The King further noted that based on this, from a humanitarian and moral point of view, the determination of Jordan cannot be questioned and added that it is not possible to ignore the condition of the refugees who need to be let into the country (King Abdullah II, 2016a). While this is not a straightforward criticism towards the approach that the EU has taken, it is possible that by mentioning the pressure from the international community on Jordan and stating that the refugees need to be taken care of, King Abdullah II was also referring to the need for shared responsibility-taking.

The King of Jordan also addressed the issue of shared responsibility-taking during several meetings with EU leaders. For example in March 2016 during his meeting with the High

Representative of the EU, Federica Mogherini, he stressed the importance of coming up with a comprehensive political solution for shouldering Jordan in light of the burdens that it is carrying by hosting the Syrian refugees (King Abdullah II, 2016b). He pointed out the same later in August while emphasizing that Jordan is hosting the most Syrian refugees in the world [in relation to its own population] (King Abdullah II, 2016c). In November, King Abdullah II once again stressed the need for support from the EU, especially for providing the refugees in Jordan with necessary humanitarian and relief services (King Abdullah II, 2016d).

In 2017, the speeches and statements of the King of Jordan did not reveal any changes to the perception of the EU nor significantly contributed to the perceptions that have already been articulated above. By 2018 the King of Jordan had started to put more emphasis in his statements to the refugee crisis being a common responsibility of the international community. While not specifically criticizing the EU or other actors for not welcoming as many refugees as Jordan, he pointed out the rising need for support in handling the crisis and taking care of the refugees. During a trilateral summit with the leaders of Greece and Cyprus in January 2018, he stated that “the plight of Syrian refugees remains an international concern, and host countries like Jordan need the world’s support. We are shouldering an immense refugee burden and cannot be left alone as we undertake this humanitarian responsibility on behalf of the world” (King Abdullah II, 2018a). Two months later, King Abdullah II said that creative solutions are needed in order to overcome the unemployment problem in Jordan that is affecting both the local youth and refugees, so that they would be prepared in the future to rebuild their countries (King Abdullah II, 2018b). He further added that “this is the heart of Jordan’s world-recognized refugee response plan” (King Abdullah II, 2018b), indicating that the international community perceives Jordan’s response to the refugee influx well and appreciates it. During the 73rd session of UN General Assembly, King Abdullah II opened up about the treatment of refugees in Jordan a little bit more by saying that “our people have opened their homes, schools, public services, hospitals. We have shared out country’s scarce resources, our food and energy, our precious water.” (King Abdullah II, 2018e).

At the same time, in all of his statements before international leaders, he kept emphasizing the importance of international support. At a meeting with a delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe, he once again stressed the need for the EU countries to shoulder their responsibilities towards the major refugee hosting countries so that they would be able to continue providing the necessary humanitarian relief (King Abdullah II, 2018c). During his meeting with the German Chancellor Angela Merkel in June 2018, the King of Jordan thanked Germany for having provided generous assistance to Jordan in hosting the refugees (King Abdullah II, 2018d). While thanking Germany for its support, King Abdullah II still stressed at the UN General Assembly session that refugee crisis is a global responsibility (King Abdullah II, 2018e). He further said that “the sacrifices we and other host countries make every day can only continue if donor nations hold up their side of the partnership” (King Abdullah II, 2018e). The latter statement also refers to the EU-Jordan Compact of 2016, by which the EU takes a responsibility to support Jordan with at least €747 million to assist in offering various support to the refugees¹⁰.

In 2019, the King of Jordan made a joint statement on the issue with the leaders of Cyprus and Greece at their trilateral summit in April. In the joint statement the leaders claimed that they appreciate the role of Jordan for hosting over 1.3 million Syrians in their country as well as acknowledge the efforts of Cyprus to host a disproportionate number of refugees (King Abdullah II, 2019). As for the situation in Greece, the joint statement of the three leaders stated the following: “We also underline the crucial role of Greece with regard to the reception and accommodation of the refugees and appreciate the humane treatment of the refugees in the country.” (King Abdullah II, 2019). While it is a joint statement and not a personal declaration of King Abdullah II, it does at least to a certain extent show his perception of EU’s response to the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean Member States to be positive.

¹⁰ European Commission. EU-Jordan Partnership. The Compact. Available at <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/jordan-compact.pdf> (Last accessed 12.05.2021).

During his speech before the European Parliament in January 2020, he pointed out that if the response weakens, the most vulnerable people – the refugees – will pay the highest price with no future ahead of them (King Abdullah II, 2020). Furthermore, he pointed out the need to invest into stabilizing the situation in Syria and the Middle East in general to avoid such crises in the future: “Do any of us, in this hall, want to see another Syrian refugee crisis unfold, with all its horror and heartbreak? Or another child washed up on your shores? I know I speak for everyone when I say, absolutely not.” (King Abdullah II, 2020). This falls in line with his previous statements stressing the need for a global responsibility to the crisis.

Conclusively, the statements of King Abdullah II of Jordan in regard of the EU’s response to the migrant crisis have been rather neutral. While he has similarly to President Erdoğan pointed out the admirable response that Jordan has given to the influx of refugees, he has not contrasted or even compared it to the one of the EU. King Abdullah II has throughout the years repeatedly drawn attention to Jordan needing more assistance from the international community, especially the EU in handling the refugee crisis. However, he has not specified whether this means the expectation of the EU to accept more of the refugees or merely the expectation of the EU to fund Jordan to a greater extent than it has. As for the perceptions of the EU in regard of its human rights practices, the King of Jordan has not focused on the issue in his statements nor commented in any specific manner the treatment of refugees or the conditions in the European refugee camps.

4.2. Civil society perceptions of the EU as a human rights model in the context of the treatment of migrants

This subchapter focuses on the external perceptions of the EU among representatives of NGOs in Turkey and Jordan. The analysis is based on semi-structured interviews. As the interviewees gave their consent to participate in the interviews anonymously, they are indicated in the analysis with letter and number combinations deriving from the first letter of their respective countries and the order in which they gave the interviews. These combinations are also indicated in Annex 3 of the thesis.

4.2.1. Turkey

Awareness on the treatment of refugees and related human rights practice in the EU

The awareness of the interviewees on the treatment of refugees within the EU, especially in the hotspot reception facilities varies. However, majority of the awareness is regarding the camps in Greece which is geographically closer to Turkey and the situation in which has been covered in a greater extent by the media. All of the five interviewees claimed that they have heard of stories of the refugees being pushed back to Turkey from the border with Greece while being treated inhumanely. For example, T1 shared a story of a refugee that they had worked with:

“I can truly talk about cases of ill-treatment by the Greek police, for example one case that I had with a refugee from Afghanistan trying to cross to Greece, they took their passport and all the documents that they had, of course including their refugee claims and as I was informed by the refugee, burned them in front of their eyes so right now they have no claim to be a refugee in Turkey or anywhere else based on the documents.”

The interviewee also pointed out a recent situation where some refugees who had been handcuffed by the Greek police had been left to the sea, claiming that the situation had also been documented through photo footage: “Two weeks ago six refugees were found wearing handcuffs on their back, they had thrown them to the sea. They were unable to swim of course, four bodies were found and two of them lived. There were so many photos of it.”.

As for the conditions in the hotspot camps, the interviewees had heard of the poor hygiene conditions, overcrowding, lack of sanitation, torture, unreasoned detention, lack of medical support and access to clean water. T3 shared their insights about the hotspots in both of the countries since they had personal experience working in the field in Italy a few years back: “Now in the collective camps [in Italy] I know that there are mainly hygiene issues and even with the supply of decent food. Also it is very overcrowded in the camps in Sicily and in Greece...I don't know where to start about Greece because they are horrible...they host five times more than the camps are structured to, you know?”. In addition to pointing out the

severe overcrowding, T4 drew attention to additional problems regarding various assistance: “There’s lack of everything, there’s lack of space to live [...] They don’t have access to washing water, clean water, they also don’t have any access to medical support there.”.

As for specific human rights violations, the interviewed NGO representatives from Turkey mentioned unexplained detentions, keeping the refugees from applying for asylum and the violation of everyone’s right to live in dignity and not to be tortured. The conclusive perceptions of the human rights conditions in the EU hotspot camps were strongly negative for all of the interviewees from Turkey. T3 claimed that they believe that all of the basic rights are being violated in the Greek camps while T4 stated that “I’ve heard such horrific stories that I don’t even want to talk about them because I just get so upset when I think about those things.”. T5 was referring to a conversation with a friend who had been wondering why the refugees want to move on to Greece at all: “He [interviewee’s friend] was witnessing hard conditions for the refugees in the Greek camps where he works. [...] So he was asking me ‘do you know why the refugees from Turkey are trying to go to the EU because the conditions there in the camps are very bad’.”. Similarly, T1 stated that in their opinion it is better for the refugees to not make it into the camps in Greece at all.

EU as a normative model on human rights and related perceptions

When it comes to the awareness on EU human rights agenda and laws, majority of the interviewees admitted that they lack specific information. However, T2 for example claimed that as far as they know, the human rights situation in general is better in the western Member States than in the eastern ones. T1 said that the EU only has limited competence in monitoring the human rights violations and would have to work more on it within specific Member States. However, T4 was being more critical, pointing out hypocrisy of the EU when it comes to human rights issues: “On paper they have good laws, but you know...in practice they are not being followed. Having a law that is not being followed makes no sense.”.

When talking of human rights in general, the interviewees agreed that Turkey should take the EU as a model to follow, pointing out certain weaknesses that Turkey has in this regard. As an answer to the question of whether Turkey should take the EU as a model to follow

when it comes to human rights protection, T1 said: “Human rights in general, indeed, they do, yes! We cannot talk about rule of law or freedom of speech in Turkey, it’s clear.”. T3 also pointed out the freedom of speech and the right to protesting or sharing certain content on social media which is not always protected in Turkey. Additionally, T5 suggested that there is more transparency in regard of human rights violations in the EU than there is in Turkey: “At this point yes, I would support that Turkey would have a similar approach as the European Union. [...] From my point of view, in the EU there is this freedom and visibility of human rights violations [...] here, we try to hide these violations.”.

Yet, when it comes to seeing the EU as a human rights protector in the world, the perceptions of the interviewees from Turkey varied. For instance T2 did not see the EU as a human rights protector because they claimed that the behavior of the EU is depending on specific circumstances and is thus hypocritical. They argued that in order to be a protector of human rights, one should always protect everyone and not only choose certain contexts or situations for that. T4 had a similar opinion on the issue: “You can say all you like, but on the ground the reality is very different. So, absolutely no! I don’t agree at all.”. At the same time, T1, T3 and T5 said that in general terms they do perceive the EU as a human rights protector in the world despite them not being ideal. T3 explained it in a following way: “When it comes to migration, I don’t believe so. [...] But in general, yes...because who is it then if not the EU? [...] It could be much better of course...there could be less hypocrisy. [...] It should be improved.”. A comparison with the rest of the world was also drawn by T5: “If we compare to the rest of the world, yes – they are the ones. If I am going to call one region that, it would be the EU. [...] But this does not mean that they are presenting the most ideal situation.”. These answers showed that even though the EU is not considered to be a perfect example on human rights protection, it is still considered to be better than the rest of the world.

EU as a normative model on migration and related perceptions

As for the perceptions of the EU in handling the migration crisis, the interviewees admitted that in their opinion, the EU has to a large extent failed in standing for its own values and human rights regulations. T3 for example said: “They definitely failed to protect...I don’t want to be all negative, there are definitely good examples within the EU, but I also think

that many more things could have been done.”. T4 was more critical, drawing attention to the hypocrisy within the EU-Turkey migrant deal of 2016:

“They have completely failed. EU has not done a good job in this crisis at all. They have separate laws for separate populations. [...] Like the EU-Turkey deal for example...what is that? [Imitating the EU]: ‘here, take some money and keep these people with you’. It is not really a humanitarian deal that they made.”.

At the same time, several representatives of the NGOs also pointed out good examples of handling the crisis in certain Member States of the EU. T4 said: “If you take separate countries like for example Germany, Sweden...they have done good things for the refugee population.”. T5 also positively pointed out Germany among other Member States, but nevertheless argued that even there the situation is not ideal:

“To my understanding, somehow they are managing much better than Turkey. [...] I was having a talk with a colleague from Germany, so I got to hear about the integration policies in Germany...compared to Turkey, I think that they manage better, but that does not mean that they manage very well.”.

Similarly, T1 brought Germany as a good example although pointed out its certain hypocritical behaviors:

“When I was in Germany I kind of liked their approach because they were offering many benefits to the refugees there.[...] but the funny part is, they were already highly qualified. I think that Germany is selecting the refugees. [...] maybe I can call that hypocrisy because they are taking in people who bring some advantage to them. Turkey does not have this choice.”

The interviewees claimed that the response of the EU to the migration crisis has changed their general perception of the EU, especially in regard of its reputation as a human rights protector. T3 for example said: “I used to be a stronger advocate for the EU to be a human rights protector before. [...] There is this human rights arrogance in a way, where some rights are only for the European citizens but not for non-Europeans. [...] My perception has definitely changed.”. The interviewees specifically pointed out that they were expecting the

EU to accept more refugees than they did. In that regard, T1 said: “I expected the EU to accept all the people coming from the war, but they select people. It shows the hypocritical face of them.”. T4 emphasized their disappointment with the agreement between the EU and Turkey:

“Yeah, in 2015 we had very many hopes that this issue would be handled better [...] I remember we had a lot of people from the EU Parliament come to visit to check the ground situation [...] they came, they saw and what did they do? They made a deal with Turkey like [imitating the EU]: ‘we don’t want these people actually so let us sign a deal, we give you this much money and you keep them’. So that was very disappointing [...] In the beginning we did not think that Europe would do that.”.

Additionally, they suggested that in cases where the EU did take refugees in, they should have treated them better.

When it comes to the question of whether the EU is seen as a model to follow on migration and the protection of refugees, the general opinion was that Turkey has in fact been handling the situation better, especially in the treatment of refugees. T2 for example pointed out that while the EU has decided to close its borders, Turkey has been welcoming and instead of keeping the refugees in camps, managed to integrate them in the society. Additionally, T4 argued that the conditions in the refugee camps in Turkey are significantly better and more advanced than in the EU: “[The camps in Turkey] are much-much better equipped than the ones in Greece.[...] The tents are there, electricity is provided, there’s schools, there’s little shops for groceries, there’s medical care. It’s not like a dump.”. T1 claimed that: “Turkey is handling so many refugees and its doing it better than the EU.”, while T3 suggested that the EU itself should take some good examples from Turkey – especially the decision to not securitize migration policies by closing the borders. Similarly to the others, T5 argued that it is better for the refugees in Turkey since the conditions in the EU refugee camps are bad and the Union is providing good opportunities only for highly qualified refugees.

To conclude, the awareness of the NGO representatives working with refugees in Turkey regarding the treatment of refugees and the related human rights practices within the EU was

sufficient enough to know of the conditions and specific human rights violations that have also been discussed in the first part of the analysis based on the FRA reports from the EU hotspots. While the EU was perceived as a human rights protector and a desirable normative model on human rights in general, the interviewees admitted that the poor treatment of refugees has undoubtedly thrown shade on such reputation and that the perceptions have turned more negative since 2015. As for the EU being a normative model to follow on migration, the interviewees argued that the EU had not been living up to its own standards in this regard, thus making it impossible to see it as a desirable model in the field and suggested that if anything, Turkey should be a model on migration and treatment of refugees for the EU to follow, not the other way around.

4.2.2. Jordan

Awareness on the treatment of refugees and related human rights practice in the EU

Similarly to the interviewees from Turkey, the NGO representatives from Jordan had mainly heard about the treatment of refugees in Greece and little or not at all about the situation in Italy. Three of the four interviewees claimed that they know of very hard conditions in the European refugee camps. J1 specifically pointed out the lack of equipment and necessary supplies in the camps, but also emphasized the vulnerable situation of refugee women: “Refugee camps in the EU are not really equipped let’s say to have that huge number of refugees. [...] Even lack of water supplies, lack of food, everything is limited, and women are at most risk of violence – sexual violence as well.”. J3 shared a specific story of sexual violence that had recently taken place in one of the camps in Greece and also referred to the mental hardship of children that are staying in the camps: “A few days ago I heard a story about a woman who fled from Afghanistan to that camp [in Greece], and she got raped on the first day that she arrived. And about children – that they are thinking about committing a suicide. [...] There’s also no privacy, no doors.”. J4 had heard about the fire in Moria camp in Greece in September 2020 and about complaints regarding poor conditions: “I’ve heard a lot about the conditions and as far as I know, they are not the best. [...] I heard many complaints about the inhumane situation.”.

Differently from the others, J2 admitted that they do not have a lot of awareness on the situation in the EU refugee camps and claimed that they know more about the situation in the Middle East, thus assuming that the conditions in the EU camps are good:

“I think the camps in Europe are in good conditions...of course I never went there to actually know the situation but compared to other countries I think it is good. I think they have food, they have electricity [...] but I have no idea about their food security, about their human rights situation. I know more about the situation in the Middle East, especially in Jordan.”.

They also pointed out that they have heard of Syrian refugees in Germany since it has accepted a large volume of them and claimed that to their knowledge, Germany has been treating the refugees very well.

As for the specific human rights violations, three of the interviewees admitted that they do not have detailed information on human rights violations against the refugees within the EU refugee camps. However, J3 mentioned violations against the right to non-discrimination, the rights of LGBTI people in the camps, the right against torture and the rights of the child. They also pointed out the problems with sanitation and clean water which are related to the overcrowding. As for the rest of the interviewees, they mentioned general inhumane living conditions which are not allowing the refugees to live in dignity.

EU as a normative model on human rights and related perceptions

When it comes to the awareness of the EU human rights laws and agenda, the interviewees had heard about the main values of the Union in general. For example J4 said: “I know that the EU is based on their values – democracy, rule of law, human rights and they have their own EU human rights constitutions and their own council to comply with these laws and regulations.”. J3 said that based on the slogans that the EU puts out on their delegation’s building in Jordan, they are strongly advocating for the rights of women and children: “I always see the slogans that they put here [on the EU building in Amman] for women’s protection and child protection mostly...these are the two things that I always see.”. J2 admitted that while they do not know a lot, they have an idea that the human rights situation

in western Europe is better than it is in eastern Europe: “Comparing for example the Eastern Europe to Western Europe, yes, Western Europe take care of human rights of course more than Western Europe. There’s more freedom of speech.”.

The perception of whether Jordan should take the EU as a model to follow when it comes to human rights practice and protection in general, varied among the interviewees. J1 claimed that perhaps Jordan should take the EU as an example only in certain cases while J2 believed that Jordan should follow the human rights principles promoted by the EU. At the same time, J2 also pointed out that Jordan has actually already signed several human rights treaties and declarations, indicating that the general human rights situation in Jordan is not bad. As a specific example, they referred to transparency in regard of human rights violations within the EU, saying that: “[...] there are [in the EU] a lot of human rights activists...you know, a lot of people who can criticize if there is something bad happening [...] like remember when in Hungary a journalist tried to hit a refugee...how the video went viral, and people started talking about it.”. On the other hand, J3 argued that in their opinion the EU should not be considered to be a good example for Jordan because of its own shortcomings in terms of human rights protection: “When you want to choose someone as a role model or you want to follow them, they need to be perfect 100%.”. Lastly, J4 claimed that Jordan is doing well in regard of human rights protection and argued that Jordan itself can actually be considered as a good example: “I don’t think that Jordan needs to take the EU as a model because Jordan itself can be considered a model, in the Middle East in particular.”.

When it comes to the perception of the EU as a human rights protector in the world, none of the interviewees from Jordan fully agreed to this image. J1 was the most critical in this regard, claiming that: “They [the EU] are just saying: ‘we are, we are, we are...’, but in practice they are not doing that much.”, arguing that the Union is not living up to its self-claimed standards and values. A similar perception was shared by J4 who said: “I think that the EU is actually trying to pursue its own interest. [...] They try to build their relations with the other countries, including Jordan, based on these values, but you cannot actually see this on the ground.”. When thinking about the reputation of the EU as a human rights protector in relation to the refugee crisis, J2 pointed out that:

“To be a protector of the human rights, I think they don’t only have to deal with the symptoms of the disease when we talk about the refugees but also To prevent this crisis in the beginning? If they really take the human rights seriously...half a million people have been killed in Syria...by their president.”.

Yet, J2 admitted that they agree to the EU being a protector of human rights in comparison to other countries who do even less in that regard. Similarly, J3 argued that while the EU has done certain things to be a protector of human rights in the world, it has not done enough.

EU as a normative model on migration and related perceptions

As for the perceptions related to migration and the treatment of refugees, the interviewees from Jordan suggested that the EU has not taken good enough care of the refugees and that the approach taken does not comply with the EU’s own values and standards. In this regard, J1 said:

“The EU is trying to be the model for other countries so by doing this, you really need to show the world that you are doing really well with managing this crisis, right? But in fact...they are not [...] The EU is interested in the [EU-Jordan] Compact because they think that by giving Jordan money and assistance, refugees will find living there instead of leaving Jordan and coming to Europe.”.

J4 also pointed out that while the EU laws would suggest a very good care and treatment for the refugees in Europe, the practice seems to have fallen behind: “In practice, the laws and the reality are not parallel. We cannot always see their laws in the practical aspects.”. J3 argued that the EU has succeeded to live up to its own standards in the protection of the refugees only partly: “I can’t say that they have failed, and I can’t say that they have lived up to their standards. They are always missing something, they are not doing it 100%, maybe like 50 or 60, but they are not fulfilling their role.” J3 was also indicating that often the response is only temporary and does not in the end provide sufficient help for the refugees in long term.

Similarly to the case of Turkey, all the interviewees from Jordan claimed that their perception of the EU had changed throughout the migration crisis since 2015. They explained that they

had expected a more sophisticated response and a more welcoming stance from the EU based on the perception that they had of the organization before the crisis. J2 emphasized that they had an expectation to the EU to take more responsibility in handling the crisis:

“As an Arab for example or someone from the Middle East – we see the EU as a symbol for freedom, for human rights. [...] we expected more from the EU. [...] We can’t deny the fact that they have supported the refugees with millions of dollars [...] but we expected more, especially from the biggest countries, these countries which are wealthy, have good resources and management, freedom of speech, they have everything – I think they can accept more refugees. [...] There is something that we call sharing responsibility.”.

The same change of image was described by J4:

“The EU has always claimed to be the protector of human rights and rule of law and the equality of all the people. But the way that the refugees were treated, the way that they closed the borders in front of them, the ways in which many refugees were dying while trying to reach Europe [...] tells you that the EU, this huge institution built on these values, once it was under crisis, all the principles were trampled.”.

The other interviewees also mentioned expecting better equipped facilities for the refugees who were allowed into the EU to seek asylum.

When it comes to the question of whether Jordan should take the EU as an example on migration and the treatment of refugees, two of the interviewees did not have a strong opinion while the other two suggested that Jordan has handled the crisis very well in their opinion and pointed out certain things that the EU itself should learn from Jordan in this regard. J2 explained it with the long-time experience that Jordan has in the field of receiving refugees: “I think EU can take Jordan as an example. Not because I am Jordanian, but because we have a lot of experience with refugees actually, for more than 70 years and the number of refugees that we have...you know, more than 30% of the Jordanian people are actually refugees.”. More specifically, J2 argued that the EU should find a better balance between securitization and humanitarian aspects:

“Maybe if we talk about the human rights, yeah, the EU takes care of human rights more in this respect than Jordan, but also the number of refugees in many countries is very-very low compared to Jordan. [...] But they can take it [Jordan] as an example on how to find a balance between security and human rights...which is not an easy task if we are talking about a million refugees – to take care of the refugees *and* respect the international laws.”.

J1 claimed that even the conditions in the Jordanian refugee camps are better and pointed out that considering the available assets of the EU, the latter should have done more in this regard:

“In the camps, Jordan is trying to provide the best that it can and even if it is not perfect, it is still better than in the other countries in the EU. Because for instance if you are looking at what is happening in Italy and Greece – they have got the money and they have got the support already from the EU. So what makes you treat the refugees this way? Why can’t you just provide them with the assistance they need and the healthcare they need and all that?”.

In conclusion, the awareness of the interviewed NGO representatives from Jordan on the human rights practice from the hotspot refugee camps and the treatment of refugees in the EU in general was good enough to be aware of majority of the problems that had been pointed out also by FRA on the visits to the hotspots in 2016 and 2019. The interviewees were also well aware of the EU human rights agenda and related values in general. As for seeing the EU as a normative model on human rights, the interviewees tended to admit that they would not consider the EU to be a desirable model to follow considering that often its actions do not comply with its own rhetoric, thus making it complicated to perceive as a good example in the field. Additionally, they claimed that their previously positive perception of the EU as a human rights protector had suffered after witnessing the response to the migration crisis. In terms of being a normative model on migration and the treatment of refugees, the interviewees from Jordan argued that Jordan itself would be a better example in this regard, especially in light of its long-term experience in the field. However, they also pointed out

that the conditions created for the refugees in Jordan are in comparison significantly better than the ones created for the refugees and other migrants within the EU.

4.3. Discussion

The analysis of the political leader's statements and the interviews with civil society representatives have shown that in case of Turkey, the discourses on the external perceptions of the EU as a normative actor on human rights protection are consistently negative in relation to the treatment of refugees. President Erdoğan has strongly criticized the EU when it comes to the treatment of refugees, claiming that the response taken by the EU does not match the rhetoric of the EU on human rights protection. This perception is also shared by the people who themselves are working with refugees in Turkey and are aware of the poor human rights conditions for the refugees that have made it to the EU. It has been argued both by President Erdoğan and the civil society representatives that the treatment of refugees in Turkey is significantly better than the treatment of refugees in the EU, especially in the hotspot camps in Greece, but also in Italy. In that sense, it is clear both from the analysis of Erdoğan's speeches and the interviews with the civil society that Turkey does not perceive the EU as a normative model to follow when it comes to migration and the treatment of refugees, as it believes that it is already performing significantly better in that sense.

However, when it comes to the perception of EU as a normative model on human rights, the findings from Erdoğan's discourse and the discourse of the civil society differ. Erdoğan has been strictly negative in his statements about the EU in terms of its human rights practices, calling it hypocritical and arguing that it has turned its back to human rights as such. The perception of the civil society is not as harsh, drawing attention to the fact that despite the poor human rights practice regarding the refugees, the EU is still viewed as a desirable model to follow on human rights because it is standing for rights such as the freedom of speech and the rights of women and is more transparent when it comes to certain violations of human rights.

As for the treatment of refugees and the general approach to migration, the shared perception of the political elite and the civil society in Turkey is that the EU has not proved to be a good

example in this specific field and thus does not deserve to be regarded as a desirable model to follow by others, specifically Turkey. Furthermore, the perception in Turkey is that the EU has largely failed its own human rights standards in this regard. On the opposite, Turkey's response is considered to be successful and is perceived to be as a positive example for other international actors since it has chosen to take a humanitarian stance instead of a securitization stance like the EU. Finally, it is clear that the perceptions of the EU as a prominent normative model on human rights have significantly suffered in light of the migration crisis since 2015. This has become evident especially from the interviews with the civil society, but also from the rising criticism on the address of the EU by President Erdoğan. However, it should not be disregarded that the intervening factor of general political relations has a greater impact on the perceptions of President Erdoğan than on the perceptions of the civil society since many of his critical statements on the address of the EU as a human rights actor are given in a context of general criticism towards the Union.

When it comes to the external perceptions of the EU in Jordan, the visible gap between the perceptions of the political elite and the civil society is more grave. King Abdullah II of Jordan has not expressed strong opinions on his impressions of the EU as a human rights actor or commented on the response of the EU to the migration crisis and the treatment of refugees. His statements regarding the crisis are strongly focused on Jordan needing assistance from the international community, including the EU. It is possible that King Abdullah II has knowingly avoided expressing critical opinions on the address of the EU regarding the topic in order to secure good relations with the Union and not to risk the financial support of the EU to Jordan. This is likely considering that the King of Jordan has kept a neutral stance towards the EU in his statements and has also not made positive remarks on the treatment of refugees within the EU.

However, the civil society in Jordan shares the negative perceptions of the EU as an actor on migration and the treatment of refugees. Similarly to the perceptions in Turkey, the perceptions in Jordan illustrate the EU as being hypocritical when it comes to the protection of the human rights of refugees. As for the general perceptions of the EU as a normative model on human rights, the civil society in Jordan sees the EU more negatively than the civil

society in Turkey. While the NGO representatives from Turkey were still seeing the EU as a desirable model to follow in terms of human rights protection, the representatives from Jordan believed that the latter is already a good enough example on by itself. Additionally, the interviews with the civil society showed that the perceived hypocrisy in terms of human rights and insufficient assistance for the refugees have made it difficult to see the EU as a normative example on human rights in general. Lastly, similarly to the findings from Turkey, the findings from Jordan suggested that the positive perceptions of the EU as a model on human rights have strongly suffered in light of the treatment of refugees by the EU since 2015.

Conclusions

This thesis aimed to answer the research question: how does the consistency between EU human rights rhetoric and practice in the treatment of migrants affect the external perceptions of the EU as a normative model on human rights and migration? In search of an answer to the research question, the study posed the following hypothesis: Inconsistency between the EU human rights rhetoric and practice in the treatment of migrants and refugees negatively affects the external perceptions of the EU as a model on human rights protection and migration. To test this hypothesis, the research conducted a comparative study focusing on Turkey and Jordan, which are both major refugee hosting states on the Eastern Mediterranean migratory route towards the EU.

The thesis consisted of three main sections. The theoretical framework section explained the concept of normative power and introduced the phenomenon of Normative Power Europe as well as discussed the EU External Perceptions Literature. The second section of the thesis presented the methodology of the research. The methodology section explained the methodological framework used for the research, introduced the sources used for the data collection and discussed the case selection and research variables. The third section was the empirical section consisting of the analysis of the research findings. This section entailed the analysis of the consistency between EU human rights rhetoric and practice and the analysis of the data on the external perceptions of the EU in Turkey and Jordan.

The consistency between EU human rights rhetoric and practice was assessed based on the match between the treatment of refugees and other migrants in the hotspot first reception facilities in Italy and Greece between 2015 and 2020 and the EU human rights commitments enshrined to the normative basis of the EU. The EU human rights rhetoric has been deeply embedded into the treaties of the Union alongside with the emphasis on democratic governance and solidarity. As part of its normative basis, the EU has committed itself to safeguarding human rights, both domestically and in its external relations, including in its treatment of migrants. These commitments, as they can be found in the treaties as well as in subsequent Council directives and regulations, form the EU's human rights rhetoric.

The analysis showed that there were serious inconsistencies between the EU human rights rhetoric and practice when it comes to the operation of the hotspots. The human rights gaps persisted both within the procedural work of the hotspots and in the physical conditions of the hotspot facilities, especially the camps hosting the asylum seekers who were waiting for a decision on their asylum application. Majority of the human rights gaps that had been outlined by European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights concerned poor living conditions, tensions between the persons staying in the hotspots and unsafe conditions particularly for children and women which were related to the severe overcrowding in the hotspot facilities. The overcrowding in return is a problem largely caused by the slow and unclear asylum application processes by the EU agencies in the hotspots. Furthermore, it was found that there are also problems with exercising the right to apply for asylum, especially in terms of accessing necessary information in that regard. The thesis argues that the EU has not been living up to its own human rights standards and values when it comes to the hotspot approach, thus confirming inconsistency between the EU human rights rhetoric and practice.

In order to identify the effect of this inconsistency on external perceptions of the EU, the empirical part of the study analyzed external perceptions from Turkey and Jordan between 2015 and 2020. The two countries were compared to control for possible intervening factors on the perceptions, such as the state of general political relations, EU funding for human rights promotion and EU funding for refugee aid. Moreover, for both countries, political elite perceptions and civil society perceptions were studied in order to increase the reliability of findings. As for the external perceptions of the EU in Turkey and Jordan, the thesis found that the perceptions of the EU as a model on human rights have significantly suffered since 2015 in light of EU's response to the migration crisis. The main reason for these negative perceptions is that the EU has preferred to treat the migration crisis as a security threat rather than a humanitarian crisis and decided to close its borders, thus offering assistance to significantly fewer refugees than had been expected. However, the research showed that the previously good image of the EU as a model on human rights has also suffered because of the poor treatment of refugees within the EU, especially in the hotspot reception facilities in Greece and Italy.

When it comes to the external perceptions of the EU in Turkey, the perceptions of the political elite, as measured through the content analysis of leaders' speeches and statements, and the civil society, as measured through the semi-structured interviews with NGO representatives, were to a large extent similar. The perception by President Erdoğan of the EU in relation to its response to the refugee crisis throughout 2015 until 2020 was strongly negative. He perceived the EU to be Islamophobic and selfish for deciding to close its borders to the migrants instead of helping them. Additionally, he perceived the EU to be hypocritical when it comes to human rights protection and claimed that it has turned its back to some of the main values stated in the treaties. Furthermore, Erdoğan was strongly contrasting the approach of the EU to the approach of Turkey, saying that the latter has been welcoming and provided the refugees with needed assistance while the EU in addition to closing its borders has been mistreating the refugees, refused to help them at the sea and created camps with poor conditions. Thus, the thesis showed that in the political elite perceptions of Turkey, the EU is not perceived as a human rights model or a model on migration.

As for the civil society in Turkey, the awareness of the NGO representatives working with refugees in Turkey regarding the treatment of refugees and the related human rights practices within the EU was good enough to know of the conditions and specific human rights violations that have been identified also by the FRA in the EU hotspots. While the EU was perceived as a human rights protector and a desirable normative model on human rights in general, the interviewees admitted that the poor treatment of refugees has definitely undermined such reputation and that the perceptions have turned negative since 2015. As for the EU being a normative model to follow on migration, the interviewees from Turkey argued that the EU had not been living up to its own standards in this regard, thus making it impossible to perceive it as a desirable model in the field and suggested that if anything, Turkey should be a model on migration and treatment of refugees for the EU to follow, not the other way around. Thus, the thesis showed that while the EU is still perceived as a human rights model, it is not perceived as a model on migration by the civil society in Turkey.

In the case of Jordan, the difference between the perceptions of the political elite and civil society were more grave. The statements of King Abdullah II of Jordan in regard to the EU's

response to the migrant crisis have been neutral. While he has similarly to President Erdoğan pointed out the admirable response that Jordan has given to the influx of refugees, he has not contrasted or even compared it to the one of the EU. The research showed that King Abdullah II has throughout the years repeatedly drawn attention to Jordan needing more assistance from the international community, especially the EU in handling the refugee crisis. However, it became evident that he has not specified whether this means the expectation of the EU to accept more of the refugees or merely the expectation of the EU to fund Jordan to a greater extent than it has. As for the perceptions of the EU in regard of its human rights practices, the King of Jordan has not focused on the issue in his statements nor commented in any specific manner the treatment of refugees or the conditions in the European refugee camps. This means that the political elite perceptions in Jordan are neither positive or negative in light of the migration crisis, but rather neutral.

The external perceptions of the EU among the civil society in Jordan on the other hand were strongly negative. Firstly, the awareness of the interviewed NGO representatives from Jordan on the human rights practice from the hotspot refugee camps and the treatment of refugees in the EU in general was good enough to be aware of majority of the problems that had been pointed out by FRA. The study showed that the interviewees from NGOs do not perceive the EU as a desirable model to follow on human rights considering that often its actions do not comply with its own rhetoric, thus making it complicated to perceive as a good example in the field. Additionally, they claimed that their previously positive perception of the EU as a human rights protector had strongly suffered after witnessing the response to the migration crisis. In terms of being a normative model on migration and the treatment of refugees, the interviewees from Jordan argued that Jordan itself would be a better example in this regard, especially in light of its long-term experience in the field. However, they also pointed out that the conditions created for the refugees in Jordan are in comparison significantly better than the ones created for the refugees and other migrants within the EU. Thus, the thesis showed that the civil society perceptions of the EU as a normative model on human rights and migration are negative in Jordan.

In conclusion, the study found that the consistency between EU human rights rhetoric and practice in the treatment of migrants affects the external perceptions of the EU as a normative model on human rights and migration. More specifically, it was demonstrated that inconsistencies between EU human rights rhetoric and practice in the treatment of migrants and refugees reflect in the external perceptions of the EU as a model on human rights protection and migration. Thus, the hypothesis put forward in the beginning of the study was confirmed based on the collected data, meaning that inconsistency results in negative perceptions. Negative perceptions of the EU as a human rights model as could be observed in Turkey are not reducible to bad political relations or lower funding on EU refugee aid but could also be observed in civil society perceptions in Jordan. The outlier was the political elite perception from Jordan, which might be related to Jordan's general dependency on EU foreign aid.

The main reason behind conducting this research was to fill a gap between the EU External Perceptions Literature and Normative Power Europe literature by investigating the role that external perceptions play in the existence of normative power. Additionally, this research provided an insight to the external perceptions of the EU in two Middle-Eastern countries – a region that has not been sufficiently studied in this manner so far. The study followed the suggestion of the external perceptions scholars who have advised for the future studies to focus on issue and region specificity and the suggestion of the International Relations' scholars who have recommended to pay more attention to the link between normative power and external perceptions. This study has demonstrated that there is a strong link between external perceptions and normative power in a sense that negative external perceptions lead to the decline of being perceived as a normative model by the others.

While the study reached its objective of testing and proving the link between external perceptions as a source for normative power, there were certain limitations to it. First, the study was able to test the external perceptions of the EU in Turkey and Jordan only among the political elite and the civil society, but not in the media which is the third major source for studying external relations. The inclusion of the perceptions of political elite and civil society raised the reliability of the study in comparison to if only one of these sources were

used. Media sources were excluded from the study because of insufficient available data in English media channels of Turkey and Jordan. However, further research could also include media under the condition of being able to analyze sources in Turkish and Arabic.

Second, the researcher was able to conduct only a limited amount of interviews due to the hardship of finding contacts from Jordan and Turkey through virtual means and the inability to do the field research physically in these countries because of the global pandemic situation. While the research managed to get sufficient insights from the conducted interviews, it would have gained more through conducting further interviews also with representatives from human rights organizations in Turkey and Jordan.

While this study has provided new insights, it has also opened the door for follow-up studies, for example on the perceptions in other regions such as in African countries to determine whether the perceptions of the EU would differ or confirm the findings of this thesis.

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Annex 1.

Interview outline

1. What do you know about the treatment of migrants and refugees in the first arrival camps (such as in Lampedusa in Italy, Moria camp on Lesbos island in Greece etc.) in the European Union? For example, have you heard about the living conditions that they have there? What kind of an impression do you have of these camps and the treatment of refugees there?
2. You may have heard some criticism from the media or through human rights/refugee agencies about the conditions in these camps. Do you know of any human rights violations that have taken place in the EU refugee camps? If you have heard such criticism, what has been criticized and what kind of human rights have been claimed to be in danger?
3. How much do you know about the EU human rights agenda and laws? What do you know about human rights talk in the EU?
4. Do you think that the EU has been treating refugees and other migrants in accordance with their own human rights laws and values? Do you think that they have failed in protecting the human rights of refugees in some cases?
5. Do you think that Jordan/Turkey should take the EU as a model to follow when it comes to human rights protection in general?
6. Do you think that Jordan/Turkey should take the EU as a model to follow when it comes to the protection of refugees and other migrants?
7. The European Union itself has claimed to be a protector of human rights. Do you agree with this?
8. Has your perception of the EU as a human rights protector changed between 2015-2021? Has your perception been shaped by the response to the European migration crisis?

Annex 2.

Consent form

INFORMED AND VOLUNTARY CONSENT

- I have been told about the topic and purpose of the interview, and how my responses will be used.
 - I have been able to ask questions about the interview and they have been answered.
 - I understand that any attributed quotes from the interview will be used and published only for academic purposes.
 - I have been guaranteed anonymity when using my quotes in the following academic work.
 - I understand that I am not required to answer any of the questions and can withdraw from the interview at any time.
-
- **I agree to participate in this interview and to my answers being used in the following academic work.**

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Annex 3.

List of interviews

Interviewee (alias)	Country/Title	Time of the interview	Place of the interview
T1	Turkey/Representative of an NGO working with refugees	23.04.2021 11:00 CET	Zoom call
J1	Jordan/Representative of an NGO working with refugees	23.04.2021 12:00 CET	Zoom call
T2	Turkey/Representative of an NGO working with refugees	29.04.2021 17:00 CET	Zoom call
T3	Turkey/Representative of an NGO working with refugees	04.05.2021 12:00 CET	Zoom call
J2	Jordan/Representative of an NGO working with refugees	04.05.2021 14:00 CET	Zoom call
J3	Jordan/Representative of an NGO working with refugees	04.05.2021 15:00 CET	Zoom call
T4	Turkey/Representative of an NGO working with refugees	05.05.2021 11:00 CET	Zoom call
T5	Turkey/Representative of an NGO working with refugees	06.05.2021 10:00 CET	Zoom call

Annex 3 (continued).

J4	Jordan/Representative of an NGO working with refugees	07.05.2021 13:00 CET	Zoom call
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